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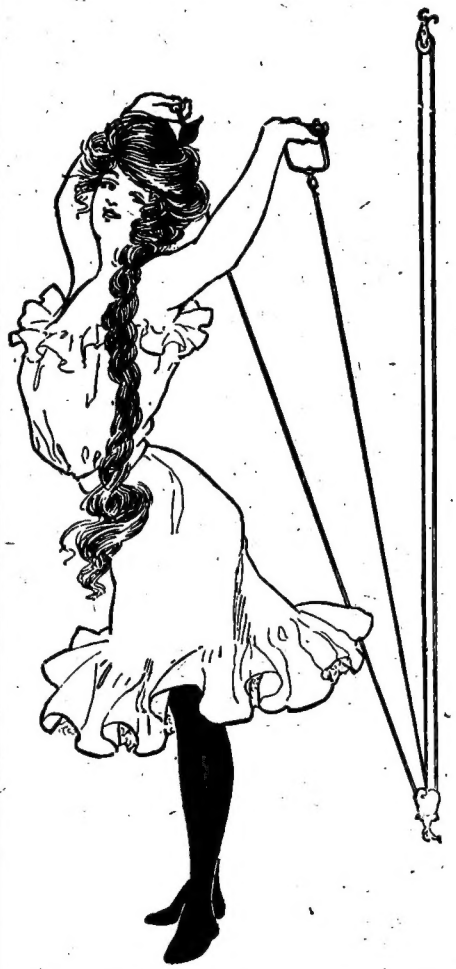

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SHORT STORIES.

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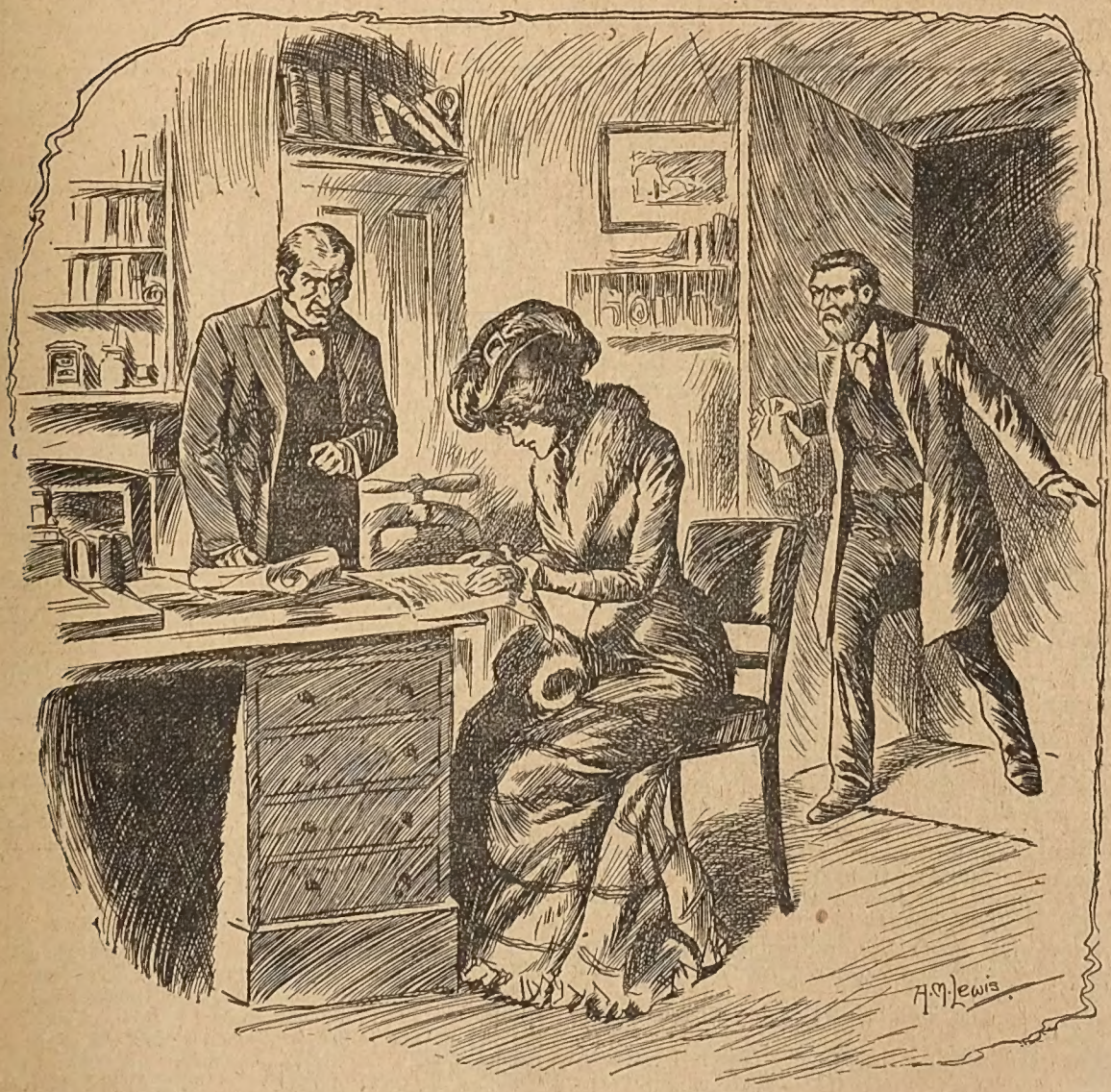
Adventures of an Actress.



Not by the faintest sign or gesture did Murdoch betray the fact that he had heard his confederate enter.

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THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTRESS.

XVIII.—THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

"A TELEGRAM for you, sir; three letters for Miss Harlow."

Such was the greeting that met Eric Monteith, Hazel Harlow, and Jenny Lovelace, as they entered the Theatre Royal, Cardiff, on the first morning of their arrival in the Welsh town.

Eric tore open the orange envelope with the feeling of misgiving that an unexpected telegram always brings with it to the recipient.

"Come to me at once," he read, "am very ill—Alice."

An expression of consternation left his lips. The telegram bore the London postmark so it was evidently his sister who had wired for him.

"I must go at once," he said, half-aloud.

In the meanwhile Hazel had listlessly torn open her own correspondence.

One of the letters ran as follows:

"Chancery Lane, London, W.C.,
"November 19th.

"DEAR MADAM,—My client, Mr. Edward Harlow, has requested me to write and inform you of the fact that he is seriously ill, and, indeed, desires to put his affairs in order in case of the untoward event of his early demise. Mr. Harlow has acquainted me with the affair that led to your leaving his roof and taking up the theatrical profession, and under the circumstances he is anxious to bring about a speedy reconciliation. I should, therefore, esteem it a very great favour if you would, as soon as your duties will permit of such a step, come with all speed to London, and confer with me here upon the subject. It would be exceedingly inadvisable for you to proceed to Honeycote without first consulting me, for reasons which it is much better to express verbally than in writing.

"Trusting to hear from you soon, believe me, dear madam, very faithfully yours, "JAMES MURDOCH."

Hardly had Hazel finished reading this somewhat extraordinary epistle when Eric turned to her and said in a low voice.

"My sister Alice is ill, I shall have to return to London at once."

And then noticing that Hazel's face had suddenly become imbued with a strange pallor, he continued: "But what is the matter, Hazel? Have you had bad news, too?"

In answer Hazel put the letter she had just read into his hand. He read it through carefully, and then said quickly, "This is indeed serious. Do you know Mr. James Murdoch?"

"Yes," replied the girl, "he is my father's lawyer, and one of the few friends with whom he has remained on terms of intimacy."

"Then that settles it," said Eric.

And after arranging with Venables as to their absence, they prepared for their journey to the metropolis, and as it would be evening before they could arrive at Paddington and Eric had begged Hazel to accept the hospitality of his sister's house. To this she had of course thankfully acceded. As the train whirled them out of Cardiff Hazel drew out the letter she had received from Murdoch, and re-read it carefully.

"It is rather an extraordinary letter," Eric said looking thoughtfully into her face, "I suppose there is no possible chance that it is still another vile plot to entrap you. But one thing, it cannot be the blackguard Caldecott's hand and brain that inspired it, for we know that he was in Brighton last week, and fully occupied with the mystery of poor old Gideon Lee."

"And besides," broke in Hazel, "Murdoch and Caldecott are sworn enemies. Mr. Murdoch hated the Squire, and I remember that they had a big scene some years ago at Honeycote. No, I can't help thinking that it is genuine, because Murdoch and my father have always been great friends, and I know that in a case like this the first man to whom my father would go would be Murdoch himself."

"Still, for safety," said Eric, "I think that if possible I'll come round with you to Chancery Lane to-morrow morning, and see if I can't get a word with Mr. James Murdoch. Of course it all depends upon my poor sister. I do hope and trust that she is really not so bad as the telegram would have me believe."

CHAPTER II.

JAMES MURDOCH was sitting alone in his private office in Chancery Lane. He was a grey-haired, hard-featured man, with keen grey eyes, and sparse, though vigorous frame, the beau ideal of an acute London solicitor. He was sitting at his desk, upon which was a pile of papers, holding in his hand a document that was in fact, the last will and testament of Edward Harlow, of Honeycote. Stripped of its legal phraseology, the will was as follows:

"I, Edward Harlow, do hereby leave my farm and all my money to my daughter Hazel Harlow under the

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following conditions. If, at the expiration of six months from this date she be still unmarried, the whole of my property shall go to her with the exception of two hundred and fifty pounds that I leave to my friend and legal adviser, James Murdoch. If, on the other hand, my daughter marries she is only to receive one half of my fortune and the farm, the rest to go to the aforesaid James Murdoch, but if, before the expiration of the six months she should marry or demise, the whole of my property is to go to James Murdoch."

The lawyer threw the paper down upon his desk.

"A most extraordinary will," he muttered, "and on the face of it a foolish one. Now there is one thing that Harlow doesn't know. He doesn't know that James Murdoch is on his last legs, and that if something doesn't happen before the expiration of six months there will be nothing for it but the Bankruptcy Court. But if Edward Harlow has made a fool of himself, there is no reason that Jim Murdoch should do the same. Why, just think of it. There is only a girl's life, my boy, between you and a very respectable little fortune. To-day is Monday; the girl would have got my letter in Cardiff this morning. Ten to one she will be here early to morrow. Is there any hitch in my plan? I don't think there can be. She comes here, disappears, and, well, I, of course, know nothing about her disappearance. It's a big risk, but there's a big stake in view."

At that moment there came a knock at the door. Murdoch thrust the papers away into the desk and cried curtly, "Come in." A clerk entered.

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Murdoch, Dr. Vanstone."

"Show him in."

The clerk retired, and the next moment Dr. Vanstone entered. He was a small, insignificant looking little man, with a white pinched face adorned with a fair beard and moustache, and with a pronounced cast in his right eye. Altogether a most unprepossessing specimen of humanity.

"Ah, Vanstone," said the lawyer pleasantly, "charmed to see you. I hope you have good news for me."

Vanstone sidled up to the lawyer's desk, and drawing up a chair, sat down at his elbow.

"It's all right," he whispered. "I've got all the papers and the certificates. It's merely a question now of getting the bird into the snare."

"Good," answered Murdoch. "Let's have the details of the business."

"Well," went on the other, still in a whisper, "from this moment there is no more Miss Hazel Harlow, but the lady's name is Miss Cynthia Fallowfield. Here is a copy of her birth certificate," and he drew a paper from his pocket, "and a deposition from her guardian that her parents are dead, and that she is who she is. She has been living for the past twenty years quietly abroad with her guardian; a month or so ago she had a serious illness, with the result that when she recovered she was found to have lost her reason, and to believe that she was a Miss Hazel Harlow, an actress who had been forced to leave her home by the persecutions of a stranger. The hallucination grew on the girl so strongly that at last her guardian had her examined and procured medical affidavits to the effect that she was insane. I have all the certificates, and masterpieces they are, all executed by a little man in Shoreditch who makes a speciality of such matters. The legal part of the business is of course in your hands, and as regards my remuneration, well, I need not remind you of the adage, my dear Murdoch, honour among——professional gentlemen."

Murdoch took the papers and examined them carefully.

"These seem all right," he said briefly, "but you have not yet told me where the hospital is that is to harbour Miss Cynthia Fallowfield?"

"At the villlage of Whitton, near Hounslow. The proprietor of the—er, establishment is a personal friend of mine, a Dr. Whitaker Johnson, whom you can perfectly trust as being a reliable man."

"If he is a friend of yours, my dear Vanstone," broke in the lawyer with a harsh sneer, "the recommendation speaks for itself. As regards you remuneration, as soon as Miss Har——, Miss Fallowfield, I mean, is safely under lock and key, you shall have your thousand pounds. And of course I need not impress on you the fact that if you get talking about this business you will probably find a trip to Portland, and a sojourn with His Majesty for a good many years will be your only rewards. We are both in the same boat, my dear Vanstone, and it's sink or swim with the pair of us. Of course, if Miss Fallowfield should happen to—er—succumb to her disorder while at Whitton, well, so much the better for us."

CHAPTER III.

When Eric and Hazel arrived at the former's house in Bayswater, it was to find that Alice Monteith had been prostrated by a sudden attack of brain fever, and that her condition, although not absolutely hopeless, was still alarming enough to convince the doctor that her life was seriously in danger. And when Tuesday morning came and the doctors plainly told Eric that his sister's life might flicker out at any moment he realised that it would be impossible for him to accompany Hazel to the office of James Murdoch. He impressed upon her most urgently the necessity for caution and advised her not to go down to Honeycote until she had returned and consulted him upon what the lawyer had told her.

This injunction Hazel promised to carry out and shortly after breakfast called a hansom and drove away to Chancery Lane.

As she mounted the stairs that led to Murdoch's office, a closed vehicle pulled up against the kerb outside, and remained there as though waiting for some one inside the building.

Murdoch's offices were on the first floor, occupying three rooms, communicating the one with the other, though there was a private door opening out of the rearmost one, the lawyer's sanctum, that allowed him to leave the building without going out by means of the clerks' ante-room.

Hazel was evidently expected and was at once conducted to Murdoch's room. He rose as the actress entered, and advancing, shook her warmly by the hand.

"It is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you, Miss Harlow," he said suavely. "I can only regret the cause that brings you here to-day, notwithstanding the fact that the same reason gives me the pleasure of renewing your acquaintance."

Hazel bowed. She never liked the man, and his bland words rang falsely in her ears.

"How is my father, Mr. Murdoch?" she asked coldly. "And why have you asked me here to-day?"

The lawyer motioned her to take a seat facing him. She sat down, with the result that her back was turned towards the private door mentioned above.

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"I am afraid that my poor old friend, your father, is sinking fast," replied Murdoch throwing as much gentleness as he could into his hard unsympathetic voice. "It would be false kindness to deceive you on this point, Miss Harlow. Indeed, so bad is he that I felt it would be best for me to ask you here first before proceeding to Honeycote."

"But if he is as ill as you say, surely it would have been best for me to proceed there before coming to you. I take it that you only wish to discuss business with me. Could not that have kept a day or so? If my father is dying, common humanity demands my presence by his bedside."

"Not altogether," came the cold answer. "Will you be so good as to draw your chair up to my desk and give your very earnest attention to a document that I must show you," and opening a drawer the lawyer drew forth a bundle of legal-looking papers, carefully bound round with pink tape, and upon the outside of which Hazel could read, "*Re* Harlow Settlements."

Hazel complied with the request. The drawing forward of her chair drowned the faint sound made by the cautious opening of the door behind her. As Murdoch unbound the papers and selected one from amongst them, which he laid down before his unsuspecting victim, a man slipped inside the room. It was Vanstone, the rascally accomplice of the foul plot already in progress.

Not by the faintest sign or gesture did Murdoch betray the fact that he had heard his confederate enter.

"I want you to study this paper very attentively, Miss Harlow" he said decidedly.

Hardly had the words left his lips before Vanstone had sprung forward with the agility of a panther. He flung his left arm round Hazel's throat from behind, checking the scream of terror that rose to her lips with all the diabolical cunning of a professional garroter.

With his other hand he pressed a white cloth to her nostrils. The pungent smell of ether filled the dingy apartment. Her incipient struggles against this unknown terrible adversary were doomed to die at birth.

"Neatly done," muttered Murdoch, rising as he spoke, "Is the carriage below?"

"Yes. I must ask you to support Miss Fallowfield, as she must now be called, upon the other side. We can then help her down the stairs, and if we meet any one, you can say that your client has been taken with a sudden fainting fit."

As Vanstone spoke he drew a veil of thick net from his pocket, and fastened it securely across the unconscious girl's face. Then, as directed, Murdoch took hold of her under one arm. With Vanstone on the other side she was half-carried, half-dragged to the door, and out into the passage that led to the head of the stairs.

CHAPTER IV.

As luck would have it, towards mid-day Alice Monteith's fever took a turn for the better. The doctor was able to assure Eric that she was now really out of danger.

As can be well imagined, his relief was unbounded.

His thoughts turned towards Hazel. To his ill-concealed uneasiness he had heard nothing from the girl since her departure after breakfast, and, as the report about Alice was now so favourable, he determined to set out himself for Chancery Lane and learn from Murdoch where she was.

It was two o'clock when he reached the lawyer's office, to find to his chagrin that Murdoch had not yet returned from lunch. To his inquiry of the clerk as to whether a lady had interviewed the solicitor this morning, he was politely informed that such had been the case. Miss Harlow had been the name of the visitor. She had remained closeted with the lawyer for perhaps half-an-hour, and had then departed in a cab—whither the man was not able to say. Mr. Murdoch would doubtless return shortly. Would Mr. Monteith wait for his return?

Concealing his annoyance and general uneasiness at what he heard, Eric decided to wait. There was an unpleasant atmosphere of uncertainty about the matter that gave the young man pardonable ground for alarm. For had not Hazel promised to return to Bayswater before taking any further steps in the matter? And if she had only been half-an-hour with the lawyer, she would have had time to return twice over in the time that had elapsed. At about half-past two Murdoch returned. Eric at once took an instinctive dislike to the man, notwithstanding the fact that he was received with almost elaborate politeness. Murdoch was urbanity personified.

"I will be perfectly frank with you, Mr. Monteith," he said. "The reason I asked Miss Harlow to come and see me before first going to her father's bedside was because there was a legal flaw in Mr. Harlow's will that required adjustment, and that could only be done by a personal interview between Miss Harlow and myself. I would take you still further into my confidence, but you must know as well as I do that such a thing would be perfectly out of the question. A lawyer may not discuss his clients' affairs with strangers, no matter who they be. All I can say then is that Miss Harlow came here, discussed the affair under consideration with me entirely to my satisfaction, and left."

"And she did not confide in you where she was going?"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders expressively. "I should not presume so much," he answered suavely, "as to counsel so eminently haughty a young lady as Miss Harlow as to what she should do, outside the immediate requirements made necessary by the fact that I am her father's oldest friend and legal adviser. And as you are probably aware the relations between father and daughter were not of the most cordial—are not, I should say."

"Then you did not advise her to proceed at once to her father's bedside? If he is your oldest friend, surely the least you could do would be to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between him and his only child?"

The lawyer's crafty eyes narrowed vindictively.

"I might take exception to your tone, sir," he said icily, "were it not for the fact that I am convinced that it is nothing less than real personal interest in Miss Harlow that makes you cross-examine me so closely. The best advice I can give you is that you yourself travel down to Honeycote—there is a train at four o'clock this afternoon from Paddington—and find out by personal investigation whether Miss Harlow has gone to her father's side."

Smarting under a sense of ignominious defeat Eric drove rapidly back to Bayswater, faintly hoping that Hazel might have returned in his absence. But as we can well understand, there was no trace of her there, and as his sister was still on the mend, he determined to

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take Murdoch's sneering advice and take the four o'clock train to Honeycote. It was after all probable that if old Harlow was dying his daughter had thrown every other consideration to the wind, and had hurried to his side.

The train seemed to crawl to the little wayside station, and it was half-past six when Eric leapt out of the train upon the deserted platform, and inquired of a lugubrious porter if there was any chance of obtaining a vehicle to drive him to Harlow Farm.

As luck would have it, a countryman from an outlying farmstead beyond Harlow's place had driven in to meet the train, and offered to convey Monteith to his destination, an offer that it is needless to say, was accepted with alacrity.

The man was plainly interested to hear that so well-dressed and obviously gentlemanly a personage as Monteith was bound for Harlow's Farm.

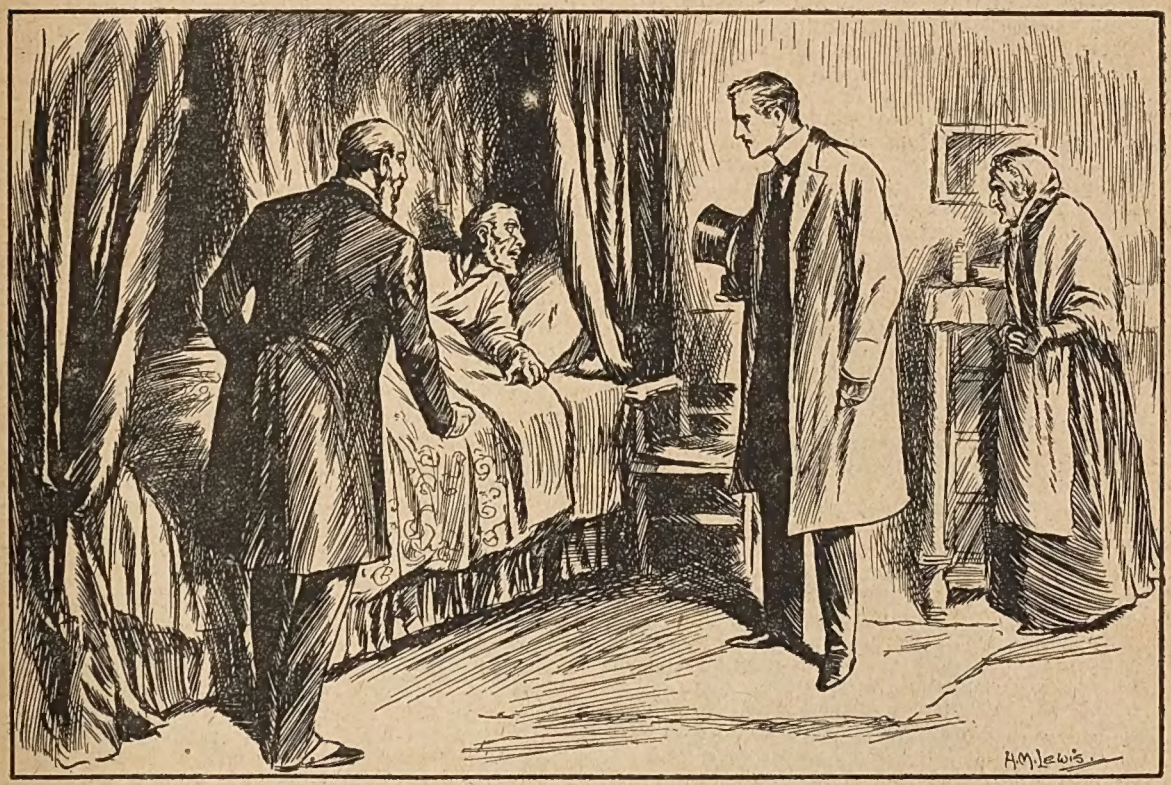
"I suppose you know he's dying, sir?" the fellow said, as they drove onward along the lonely country road.

"Yes," came the quiet answer. "It is that fact that brings me here to-night. Can you tell me what he's suffering from?"

"Well, sir, to tell you the truth, 'e's allus been a 'ard liver 'as 'Arlow. It's the effect of drink 'e's dyin' from as much as possible. Ever since 'is daughter left 'im, tho' it was 'is own fault that she ran away, e's taken to the bottle more than ever. And then 'e 'ad a rumpus with Squire Caldecott. And then the Squire disappeared, and we've 'eard all sorts of wild tales about 'im. They say 'e'll never dare show 'is face about 'ere again, though I never heard the rights of the story. But it seems rather a wonder that Miss Hazel 'asn't come down here now that she knows, as she must, that her father lies dying."

"Then she's not down here?" Eric tried to keep his voice calm, and to stifle the dread that caught suddenly at his heart.

"No, sir. But there's Harlow's Farm up there yonder to the left. My way lies straight ahead. Good night, sir, and thank you," for Eric had slipped a piece of money into his expectant hand.



"I'll! my little Hazel ill! Then I shan't see her again this side of the grave."

The young man followed the directions, and speedily drew up outside the old farmhouse.

So this was where Hazel had been born. Here she had passed her childhood's days, to fly away before the cruelty of the parent who from all accounts lay dying within. Where could she be now? Mechanically Eric advanced to the front door of the farmhouse and knocked gently at the weatherbeaten portal.

The door was immediately opened by an old woman upon whose face were traces of recent tears. There was no hall, and Eric found himself gazing into the old farm kitchen.

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"Yes, sir?" said the old woman inquiringly. "What might you be pleased to want?"

Monteith hesitated, somewhat at a losst ok now how to begin.

Then he said, "How is Mr. Harlow?"

"Sinkin', sir! Sinkin' fast," came the reply, with a sudden burst of tears. "The doctor's within. It's piteous to hear him. He keeps asking for Miss Hazel. Why don't she come? Why don't she come?"

"I come from Miss Harlow," broke in Eric, not altogether truthfully, yet actuated to make the statement by a sudden resolve to shield Hazel from the heartlessness he knew her to be incapable of, and that he knew would be imputed to her unless he were to say something on her behalf. "She is ill, and cannot come. She asked me to come here for her. Believe me, she would be here if it were possible."

"I knew it! I knew it!" wailed the old dame, her tears breaking out anew. "I knew my sweet Miss Hazel was not capable of such conduct without a cause. Come inside, sir, come inside. Master must hear this from your lips."

Eric followed her inside the house, and up a steep flight of oak stairs devoid of carpet, and so into a long, low chamber.

At one end of the room was a huge four-poster bed, by the side of which was the local doctor. Upon the bed itself Eric saw the picture of a man, an elderly, grizzled haired, red-faced being, who lay moaning upon the couch, his gnarled hands gripping the sheets with convulsive grip.

The doctor looked up, and a puzzled expression came into his face as he saw this tall, well-dressed stranger enter the death-chamber.

"I come from his daughter," Eric said, in a low voice. Faint as the words were, the dying man heard them.

"Who are you?" he said faintly, "her husband, or what? Why hasn't she come herself?"

A dull wave of colour reddened Monteith's face.

"Your daughter is exceedingly ill herself, Mr. Harlow," he said gently, though it cost him an effort to utter the lie that he felt he must voice.

"Ill, my little Hazel ill! Then I shan't see her again this side of the grave." Harlow's voice had grown strangely gentle. The approach of death had chased away the roughness of his habitual tone. "Draw ye nigh, doctor, and you, sir, whoever ye be. I'm going fast now, and before I go I want to put everything straight. The last will I made ain't a straight one. I want to make another, and to get you two to witness it. Paper and a pen, quick, before it is too late. Write just what I say: 'I leave all my property unconditionally to my daughter Hazel Harlow, except two hundred pounds for Martha Jelfs, my housekeeper.' Have you written that, doctor?

"Then let me sign it quick. So! Now do you two gentlemen put your names. I reckon that will be legal enough. I've been a bad lot. Put down your head, closer, doctor. It's gettin' dark. Give my love to Hazel, and tell James Murdoch from me——" But the message to the lawyer was never completed. Before he could finish his sentence Harlow was dead.

CHAPTER V.

When Hazel Harlow recovered consciousness, it was to find herself in a small barely furnished room, with a window covered with frosted glass set up high on the wall. She was lying upon a couch, while over her bent a woman little more than a girl.

"How do you feel now, Miss Fallowfield?" asked the stranger, who was dressed, it is worthy of mention, in a kind of uniform similar in certain respects to the garb adopted by hospital nurses.

Hazel gazed at her in amazement. "Why do you address me by that name?" she asked wonderingly. "My name is Harlow, Hazel Harlow Do you mind telling me where I am?"

The other laughed. "Oh, of course," she said somewhat mockingly, "I forgot. You are Miss Hazel Harlow, an actress, and you are continually being persecuted by a man who wants to marry you!"

"You seem to know all about me," continued Hazel, her wonderment deepening. "Why then did you call me Miss Fallowfield a moment or so ago? And you have not yet told me where I am." Her gaze swept the bare little apartment. "Am I in a hospital? If so, why? Ah!" She gave vent to the cry because the memory of what she had gone through in the office of Murdoch came back to her with overwhelming distinctiveness.

The other looked at her curiously.

"Yes, you're in hospital," she said slowly, with a faint intonation on the last word. "And you're to stay here until you know that you're Miss Fallowfield, and have forgotten all about the rich lover.".

The colour ebbed away from Hazel's face. While the other had been talking her thoughts had been busy. She was rapidly piecing together the links in the chain that had bound her so suddenly to the horrible truth. At that moment a horrid scream, the cry of a wild beast it almost seemed, rang out from a room near to hers.

She put her hands to her ears and uttered a moan of agony. "It is no dream, then," she muttered hoarsely. "I see it all now. I am in a mad-house. But why? Why? Why?" Then she turned to the girl, whom she now realised was her keeper, and flinging herself upon the ground, wailed out: "Save me, oh, save me, I implore you! I am not mad, I swear it! I have friends who will pay you well if only you will aid me to escape. I am Hazel Harlow, I swear it"—but the other put up her hand.

"It is not a bit of use your exciting yourself, Miss Fallowfield," she interposed quietly, "why there is a lady here who has offered me millions of pounds if I will help her to escape. Another said she would make me Queen of England. You know you are sent here for your good, to try and cure you from all the foolish hallucinations that torment you. So take my advice and keep your mouth shut about Hazel Harlow." With which she went to the door and left the room abruptly.

For a few moments after her departure Hazel sat motionless, staring before her with wide-open vacant eyes.

Could it be true? Could this be the real explanation of Murdoch's wicked attack? For what reason could he have committed so dastardly a crime?

Then her poor overtaxed brain broke down beneath the strain of attempting to solve the horrid enigma. She flung herself down upon the couch and burst into a paroxysm of wild tears.

Suddenly the door of the room opened for the second time. She did not trouble to raise her head, thinking it was only her keeper who had returned. Then a soft

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voice fell on her ears. "Don't give way like that, Miss Fallowfield," it said; "No one wishes to do you any harm."

At the speech Hazel sprang up anew with blazing eyes. "It is all a horrible conspiracy," she cried, "a conspiracy to drive me out of my mind."

The new-comer was clad as the other attendant had been. Her face, though pale and worn, had a sweet expression. There were faint tinges of grey in her dark hair.

She looked at Hazel intently for a few moments. Then a slight cry left her lips. "Listen," she said in a low voice, "can you tell me what happened at Newcastle some time ago in connection with the theatre there?"

There was something in the woman's voice that brought the colour back to Hazel's face.

She made a swift movement across the room, and laid her hand upon the arm of the other.

"Your question tells me that you know who I am," she said in her low sweet voice. "The Newcastle theatre was burnt to the ground, and it was only by a miracle that my life was saved. Your face tells me I am right. You know that my name is not Fallowfield, that a vile conspiracy has taken away my name, and thrust me into this terrible place!"

"For the love of Heaven do not speak so loud," came the answer, in a terrified whisper. "Yet it is as you say. I was in Newcastle that week, and I saw you act. I know there cannot be two such faces as yours in England. Yes, you are, you must be, Hazel Harlow. What does it all mean? What does it all mean?"

"It means that I am for some reason or other the victim of some horrible conspiracy. But thank God that at last I have found a friend. And you are my friend. I know it. Listen, and I can tell you how you can help me. Write to Mr. Eric Monteith, at 36, Chester Place, Bayswater. Tell him I am here He will save me and reward you for your goodness."

"I will, I will," answered the woman brokenly. "For I know that you are indeed Hazel Harlow."

CHAPTER VI.

It was quite out of the question for Eric to return to London on the night that had witnessed the death of Edward Harlow. A shakedown was found for him in the farmhouse kitchen, but, as can be well imagined,

"Save me! Oh, save me, I implore you. I am not mad, I swear it!"

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there was little sleep for him that night. When morning came he departed to London by the first train, the same that had conveyed Hazel to London on her flight from the farm a few months ago, and in his pocket was the last will and testament of the man whose death bed he had attended. As can be well imagined he was all anxiety to get home for two reasons. Firstly there was his sister Alice still ill. Secondly, he was in hopes of hearing news of Hazel. It was eleven o'clock before he reached London; he found to his relief that his sister was still on the mend, and that there was no word from Hazel, neither had anything been heard of her.

Monteith was almost at his wits' end to know what to do, that there had been foul play somewhere there could be no doubt, but whether it was the hand of the villain Caldecott that was traceable in the affair, or James Murdoch, had yet to be proved. The finger of circumstance pointed very strongly to the latter. Accordingly Eric made a fair copy of the will that bore Harlow's signature, and stowed the original carefully away in his strong box with his other private papers, and then determined to seek out Murdoch and confront him with the document, for he had now strong suspicions that it was Murdoch who had somehow done away with Hazel, in connection with the will that the dead farmer had revoked in his last moments. And had not Harlow's last words had reference to the lawyer? As he had expected, Murdoch refused to see him, but Eric was not to be put off thus. Before the clerk in the outer office could prevent him he had swung open the inner door that led into the ante-room that had in its turn access to Murdoch's own sanctum, to enter the lawyer's own office without the least ceremony.

Murdoch was seated at his desk. As Eric swung into the room he rose to his feet with an evil scowl.

"May I ask the meaning of this unwarrantable intrusion?" he snarled.

"Certainly," came the cool answer, "read that." And the young man flung the copy of the will upon the lawyer's writing-table.

Almost against his will, and impelled by an overpowering curiosity, the lawyer picked up the paper and read the document carefully through. His face showed but little surprise.

"Well," he snarled, "what does this play-acting mean? Anybody can write out a few sentences upon a piece of note paper."

Eric gave vent to a grim laugh. "Not so fast," he said. "That piece of note paper is a true copy of Edward Harlow's last will and testament. As you will doubtless see it post-dates all others, and is witnessed by Dr. Jeffreys and myself, who were both present at your late client's death-bed."

"It's a lie," almost howled the solicitor, springing to his feet and throwing off the last rag of self-control in his rage. "It's a lie! A put-up job to try and bounce me, but you needn't think to deceive me with your flimsy pretexts." And with an oath he tore the document through and through.

Eric watched him with a face of iron.

"I'll make you eat those words before you are much older, Mr. Murdoch," he said icily, "and I don't leave this office until you have told me what you have done with Miss Harlow."

His coolness recalled the other to his senses. With an effort he sank down into his seat again, though his face was deadly pale, and there were hard lines upon his forehead, and round his cruel mouth.

"You must excuse my outburst, Mr. Monteith," he said, in a changed voice, striving to appear once more the calm cold man of business. "The fact is I have had a lot of trouble lately in connection with Miss Harlow and her affairs, and, indeed, I was just on the point of writing to you to tell you that I thought I had a clue to the whereabouts of the young lady in whom you seem to be so strongly interested. The fact of the matter is that when she let my office yesterday (I have ascertained this from inquiries) she did not drive away in a cab as I supposed, but was seen to walk away with a gentleman in the direction of Holborn. That is all the clue I have to what became of her. I am indeed sorry, because if the will that you have in your possession is really a genuine one, it will be but little good unless Miss Harlow can be found. Of course I shall do all in my power to discover her whereabouts. I have already communicated with the police and with your aid we shall no doubt hear something of her before long."

During this speech Eric's eyes had never left the man's face. He knew that the lawyer was lying; he felt convinced he was wilfully deceiving him as regards the true explanation of Hazel's disappearance. It was as much as he could do to restrain himself from flying at the lying rascal's throat and endeavouring to shake the truth out of him by main force.

At that moment, fortunately for Murdoch, a client was announced. Eric was quite averse to making a scene under the circumstances, especially as he had such little data to go upon.

In the outer office was a District Messenger boy with a note for Monteith. Eric tore it open. It was an urgent appeal from the doctor to return at once, as his sister Alice had developed symptoms of a serious relapse. Eric ground his teeth in silent impotence. In the face of such an appeal there was no help for it. He must return at once to Chester Place. He arrived back to find Alice unconscious, a condition in which she remained for some hours, hovering precariously between life and death. One of the most famous specialists in London was summoned, and towards three o'clock the sick girl rallied; for the present her life had been saved.

A letter came for Monteith by the afternoon's post, written in an evidently feminine hand, and with the postmark of Whitton on the envelope. Listlessly he tore it open, but the moment his eyes glanced down the page at the written matter it contained, his heart leapt up within him. This is what he read: "Mr. Eric Monteith is urgently wanted at Pelham House, Whitton, as soon as possible after receiving this. He will there hear news of Miss Hazel Harlow."

That was all, but it was enough. Waiting to reassure himself that his sister was indeed better again, he dashed out into the street and hailing a passing hansom, directed the driver to Pelham House, Whitton.

"Why, that's beyond Hounslow," said the man sullenly, "I ain't going to drive right out into the country." But Eric leapt into the cab.

"Five pounds if you are there before five o'clock," he said. The cabman's demeanour changed. His eyes brightened at the prospect of such a bait, and he lashed up his horse, which was soon careering away in the direction of Hounslow. At the village of Whitton it was necessary to make inquiries for Pelham House.

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"Oh, that's an asylum," answered the policeman they asked. "First turning to the right at the end of the street, and then the first big iron gates on the right again."

An asylum! Eric's blood boiled at the words. In a few minutes the panting horse was pulled up outside the gate, just as a distant clock chimed the hour of five. Eric pulled a couple of sovereigns out of his pocket.

"Wait here," he said to the man, "I hope to be back again before long."

He tugged furiously at the wrought-iron bell pull dangling at the side of the grim cast-iron gateway. A porter in uniform came out of the lodge just inside the gates and peering through the gate, asked Eric his business. A half-sovereign was thrust into his hand.

"Let me in," said Eric, "It's a matter of life and death." The palm oil worked wonders; the gates were flung open, and Eric stormed inside and dashed headlong down the drive towards the house, a severe red-brick mansion that must in Georgian times have been the abode of some court gentleman.

Again Eric pealed at the bell, another attendant threw open the door and looked in some surprise at the well-dressed breathless young man who confronted him.

"I must see the superintendent of this place at once," said Eric. Hardly were the words out of his mouth than a frock-coated, venerable-looking gentleman issued from a room at the back. "Yes," he said blandly, "What can I do for you?"

"Give me a word in private."

"Certainly, pray come this way." And the superintendent of the establishment, for such he was, ushered his unknown visitor into a comfortable ante-room leading out of the hall.

"First of all," began Eric, "do you know Mr. James Murdoch?"

"Perfectly," answered the other, "I presume you mean the solicitor in Chancery Lane."

"I do. Have you had any communication with him lately?"

The doctor knit his brow. "Really, my dear sir," he answered blandly, "I do not feel at liberty to discuss my private affairs with a perfect stranger."

"Then let me speak," came the hot answer. "My name is Monteith, and I have just come from the office of James Murdoch. I am personally acquainted with the young lady named Miss Hazel Harlow, whom I have reason to believe is incarcerated in this establishment under another name. You must know ever since the publication of Charles Reade's famous novel how strenuous the Government of this country were to revise the lunacy laws, and you must know, better than I do, what the penalties are for the false detention of persons who are absolutely sane. If you refuse to comply with my request and allow me to see Miss Harlow, I will set such a nest of hornets buzzing about your ears that will spell ruin to you, and the carrying on of this establishment."

The other man went pale to the lips at Eric's outburst.

"But my dear sir," he cried deprecatingly, "I am an honourable man, and I assure you that this establishment is carried on under the most careful lines. After what you have said I will be frank with you. Some time ago I had a letter from this Mr. Murdoch asking me if I would undertake the guardianship of a young lad whose trustee he was, and whose name was Miss Cynthia Fallowfield. He sent me papers fully attested by a medical man to the fact that this young lady was insane, and that she was suffering from delusions that she was a Miss Hazel Harlow, who was being continually persecuted by a rich lover. Miss Fallowfield had been educated abroad, and her parents were dead. The matter was investigated, and no flaw could be found and yesterday morning Miss Fallowfield was brought here by Dr. Vanstone, who is a man with a large practice in London."

"The black-hearted brute," broke in Eric, "I see it all now. Will you let me see Miss Harlow, who I assure you is an actress who has won great renown for herself in the provinces."

The doctor touched an electric bell at his side. An attendant appeared.

"Bring Miss Fallowfield here at once," said the superintendent curtly, giving of course the name by which Hazel was known in the establishment. The man retired, and in a few moments the door opened again and the same woman whose hand it was that had written the note to Eric, and who had so providentially recognised Hazel from seeing her in Newcastle, entered the room, preceded by the much ill-used actress herself. Hazel was very pale, but as she caught sight of Eric's face, the colour came back to her cheeks. She darted forward and flung herself unrestrainedly into her saviour's arms.

"Thank God," she muttered brokenly, "Thank God you have found me at last."

* * * *

When, early on the morning after Hazel's deliverance from the asylum the police were sent round, at Eric's instigation, to James Murdoch's office, it was only to find that the ruffian had given them the slip and had fled away never to be heard of again. Vanstone was apprehended and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, while the superintendent of the asylum was severely reprimanded and mulcted in a heavy fine for his carelessness in not having more fully investigated the antecedents of the girl whom he had received into his establishment.

Alice Monteith recovered, thanks to the untiring devotion of Hazel, who gave up the remainder of the week to nursing her lover's sister back to life. And in Hazel herself a great change had taken place. Eric's unswerving devotion and knightly loyalty to herself had at last borne fruit, the seeds of love had taken root in her heart and were blossoming forth into full fruition, though the time was not yet come when she felt that she could unveil her feelings, and give Eric the reward he so ardently longed for.

Next week the *Good Samaritan* Company visits Bradford, and Hazel is the indirect means of the discovery of a fearful tragedy, details of which will appear in next week's *Short Stories*.

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THE WHITE JASMINE.

THE "Imperial Bagdad," the city of the powerful Caliphs of the East, was in mourning. The shops were closed, and the bazaars with their thousand curiosities brought from far-off regions, did not gladden the eyes of the passers-by. At the mosques, men and women, prostrated on the stone floor, prayed fervently to Allah; for the flower and pride of Bagdad, the morning star, Leila-Radyah, the beautiful, the daughter of the Caliph, was dying—dying slowly of an unknown disease, and all the science contained in the vast Caliphate of Bagdad, or the gold spent by her frantic father, had been powerless to bring back to her cheeks the beautiful roses of health.

All the men skilled in medical science in Bagdad, magi from Persia, sages from Egypt, who had acquired in a wonderful way the secrets of medicine possessed by the ancient Egyptian priests, learned physicians from the Greek Empire; all had tried their knowledge and skill on the princess, and endeavoured to bring her back from the shadowy world she was soon to enter; but after awhile they gave up in despair, and declared that only Allah, the great Allah, could restore her to health; then the Caliph, to whom Leila-Radyah was as the light of Heaven is to the soul, bowed his head in mute grief, and with Eastern humility exclaimed, "Allah-il-Allah, it is fate."

One day, when the sun was sinking in the far West a traveller entered Bagdad through one of the gates which looked towards the side of the rising sun; a man advanced in years, his swarthy skin, and bright youthful eyes contrasting oddly with the snowy whiteness of his beard and hair. His dress, travel-worn and stained, and made in a different way from the prevailing way in Bagdad, indicated that he came from a long distance. The man approached an Arab standing at a street corner and said with quiet dignity:

"Take me to the palace of thy master, the Caliph."

The Arab answered simply.

"Come with me," and the stranger followed in his footsteps.

When at the door of the palace the traveller dismissed his guide, and said to the guard:

"I wish to see the Great Caliph; tell him that a 'Wise Man' from far-away India has come to cure the Princess."

The soldier took him to the Caliph, for he had orders to immediately introduce into the royal presence anyone coming on such an errand as this.

With great majesty and solemn countenance, the "wise man" advanced towards the Caliph. When at the foot of the throne he stopped, crossed his hands on his breast, and without kneeling, bowed profoundly three times, then waited for the sovereign to speak.

"What dost thou want?" asked the Caliph.

"Mirror of the faithful! Defender of the true faith, the fame of thy might and power hath reached even to the banks of our sacred river—the purifying Ganges; also of how thy daughter, the flower of Moslem, was ill and dying, and earthly science was powerless to save her from crossing the dreadful bridge; but I, O King! can save her."

"How can that be?" asked the Caliph in wonder. "Thou hast not even seen her."

"Thou hast said it, but the stars have revealed to me their secret, and I can save her from death. Take me to her."

On a couch, surrounded by her female slaves, amid cushions and silks of damask, lay Leila-Radyah, pale as moonlight; the two midnight stars which in health lighted her face were heavily veiled by her eyelids. She was supremely beautiful, even at her dying hour.

The Hindoo approached her couch, and with his hand touched lightly her forehead. She opened her eyes and closed them again, sinking immediately into the usual stupor.

Then the "Wise Man" walked towards the exit of the room and the Caliph went with him. The Hindoo walked by the side of the monarch, silent and thoughtful, and when they entered the throne-room, asked from the sovereign a secret audience.

Hastily dismissing everyone, the Caliph prepared himself to hear what the stranger had to say.

The Hindoo began to speak in a low impressive voice carrying conviction and hope to the heart of the poor father.

"It is decreed by Fate, that the Princess, thy daughter, leave this world for the one promised to the faithful, when four times the moon shall have shone full in the midnight sky; but Allah has left thee one hope. Only one thing can save her; and the remedy is as difficult to obtain as her illness is mysterious. Art thou ready to make every sacrifice?"

"Yes; if thou canst do aught for her, speak, and if she lives I will give thee gold, and land, and slaves; I will make thee wealthy; more, even her hand in marriage thou shalt have."

"No, King, I ask nothing, and only wish to return to my country when the Princess is cured. Gold has no charms for me, nor woman any allurements. Her hand must be the reward of her saviour; for I will only indicate what will cure her, and a young, vigorous man must go in search of it. Listen to me, O great Caliph!

"Far away in the West, in the region of the setting sun, is a land; the fairest land in this mortal world. Its name is Hispania. In this country the sky is always blue and pure. Its mountains shine like precious stone when stricken by the morning sun; soft breezes from the sea fan the leaves of tall, stately trees, and amid their foliage sings the bird with the flute-like voice, a song of love to the stars above. The ground is covered with a carpet of moss and flowers, with here and there a tiny rivulet, crystalline as a diamond, descending from the mountains and making its way towards the sea.

"In this paradise of earth cultivated by the hands of an houri, grows a beautiful white flower, exhaling a fragrance like unto that of the breezes of Heaven; if any one can go to that far-off land, and bring this

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heavenly flower to Bagdad before thy daughter dies, then she will live; for its perfume means life and health to her. Have this fact proclaimed through all thy kingdom and let those who wish to undertake the perilous journey go, and may Allah grant that they return in time."

Through all the kingdom the criers proclaimed the news, that if any man, however humble or poor he might be, could obtain and bring the wonderful flower from the Occident, he would have as a reward the hand of the beautiful Leila-Radyah.

Three powerful princes who loved Leila-Radyah started on the long journey in quest of the life-giving blossom.

The first, young and handsome Prince Ali, perished in the burning sands when crossing the Arabian desert.

The second, a nephew of the Caliph, Hassan, decided to make the voyage by water; so, on reaching the Mediterranean shore, embarked, and a few days later fell captive into the hands of pirates. He was set at liberty after paying a heavy ransom, and, tired of suffering misfortunes, returned to his native land.

The third, Ab-de-Rhaman, was a prince of the royal house of the Omnyades, a dynasty which had been overthrown by the grandfather to the present Caliph. Ab-de-Rhaman was young and handsome; Princess Leila-Radyah was the soul of his soul, and she also loved him, but the Caliph had sworn never to give his daughter to the young prince; but now, should he go and bring the magic flower, when the beautiful Leila rose from her couch she would belong to him, for the Caliph had promised her hand to her saviour, and a Caliph never breaks his word once given to his subjects. So he started from Bagdad toward Hispania with his heart full of love for his Princess. Well he knew the perils and difficulties that he would encounter on the way; but what cared he for all the hardships he would have to suffer, if only he could come back to Bagdad in time and with the beautiful blossom in his hand.

He crossed the desert of Mesopotamia and reached the seashore. He engaged passage in a Greek vessel bound for Gallia and Hispania, but a tempest threw him on the coast of Africa. Nothing daunted Ab-de-Rhaman continued his way on foot. He suffered hunger and thirst; he was taken prisoner but he escaped, and at last, leaving behind the burning sands and barren rocks of the African soil, he crossed the narrow sea between the African continent and Hispania. That night the moon shone full in the midnight sky for the second time. He stood on the rock of Jabel-Tarik, and gave thanks to Allah.

Beautiful beyond description was Hispania. The sky was bluer than the Indian sapphires, and the ground was carpeted with bright-hued flowers.

The kingdom of the Goths was established in Hispania, and Ab-de-Rhaman saw that the women wore their faces uncovered, Their eyes were of the colour of the sky, and their hair like sunbeams. Yet he saw no woman as beautiful as his Leila-Radyah.

The people spoke in a strange language and could not understand him, so they took him to a wizard, who passed his time collecting flowers of the field during the day, and at night looking at the stars from the top of an old turret.

The astrologer spoke to Ab-de-Rhaman in his own language, and it was like sweetest music to the ears of the exiled prince. He told the wizard his story, and received from his hands a beautiful pure white blossom with petals as white and soft as the silks of damask, and a perfume like unto that of Paradise.

The magician gave him a box of sandal-wood, of curious workmanship, inside of which the flower should be placed that it could reach the Eastern city fragrant and fresh.

How the Prince treasures his little casket, containing the life-giving flower. He thanks Allah, and then saying farewell to the astrologer, starts on his eastward journey.

Hardships, misfortunes are nothing to Ab-de-Rhaman; he has only one thought, to reach the Queen of the East, Bagdad the beautiful, before the moon has shone full for the fourth time in the midnight sky.

Night and day he presses to his heart his treasure, the sandal-wood box, with the health-giving flower inside; and at last one day, Ab-de-Rhaman sees, with the first rays of the morning sun, the minarets crowned by the crescent of the queenly city of Bagdad.

He hears the imam, who from the tall minarets calls the people to their morning prayer, and sees that the gates of the city are thrown open, then, taking off his tattered shoes, the Prince falls on his face, and gives thanks to the mighty Allah; for to-day is the last day of grace, and in the night the moon will shine full for the fourth time in the midnight sky.

He enters the city. No one knows him, so soiled and torn are his garments, and his hair and beard long and unkempt. He goes to the presence of the Caliph, and kneeling before him, says:

"Behold, oh great king! mirror of the faithful, son of our great prophet! Behold I bring here the flower that will cure the Princess Leila-Radyah," and the Caliph asks in wonder, for he had lost all hope of ever having the flower:

"Who art thou?"

"I am the Prince Ab-de-Rhaman," and the Caliph bows again his head, and says "It is fate," then, "Follow me."

Together they go to the bower of Leila-Radyah, and see her beautiful pale face. Now she hardly breathes but the "Wise Man" from India approaches her couch, gives utterance to some mysterious words, then places the white blossom beneath her nostrils, and calls her spirit from the shadows.

She opens her eyes, and the blood comes back to her cheeks and lips; then they know that she will live; but the beautiful white blossom, fresh and fragrant a minute before, is withered and yellow.

There was great rejoicing at the wedding of Leila-Radyah and Ab-de-Rhaman; but after awhile the Prince yearned again for a sight of that beautiful far-off land, which was the image of Paradise; and so it came to pass that he, at the head of a great army, crossed Africa, conquering everything on his way, and crossed again the straits of "Jabel-Tarik," and defeated the effeminate Gothic King Rodrigo.

Beautiful Hispania was conquered and submitted to the Saracen rulers, and Ab-de-Rhaman was the first Caliph, the founder of the great Caliphate of Cordova, reigning many years in glory with his beautiful Sultana Leila-Radyah.

The wonderful sandal-wood box was preserved to the last of the Saracenic rule in the mosque of Cordova, then it was lost, but the jasmine was always considered by the Moslems, in Spain, a sacred flower.

H. Clifford.

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A Mother's Agony.

I was sixteen yeares i' that yeare o' th' flood at Hampton, whereby my father, Robert Moody, came to 's end—his boat and he being lifted inland, they sayd, almost in sight of our home, and then drawn down to death by th' mighty arm o' th' deep seas. Well I mind our home. 'Tis a small place where three littel pines stand in a row, the length of a meadow from th' common field and oure next naybur—a solid, low house under big trees, and well set about with palisadoes—the Garrison House they began to call it that yeare.

My mother, Mistress Betty Moody, could scarce abide in oure house before my father's dreadfull daye—so fearsome was she of redskins. For alle th' world doth know that in that yeare—'twas ten yeares before King Charles died—th' red men harr.ed all New England. After th' flood she grew so passionatelie afeared that if a hen did but cackle on a stone step th' cloud would grow upon her features ike a sea turned upon th' land, and she would catch up th' babe, glancing fearfullie at my brother cutting wood or hoeing the patch, and me upon th' dye-tub knitting. And of moonlit nights she would stare from our lattice upon the deepe woods.

"Child," she had said to my brother often, as we all peered together, ready dressed for a flight, "does that bush move? 'Tis th' color of th' pale ground."

The Indians forayed in white, to shimmer along in th' silence of the moon like vapors lying next the ground."

"Deare my mother," my brother would say, looking bigge as he could, but trembling, too, though he sayd 'twas because the April night was chill, and the woodpile too small for a brave heat, "hast thou not me? And the Garrison House so near!" Robert alwaies added this last, though he was a brave dark boy, like our father in 's face, straight-browed and looking with level eyes. He would cry when he fondled the babe such nights—'twas a sweet girl babe and white like our mother. And finally, when one night came a man riding hard to tell that Watohantowet—who had long disputed boundaries—was on the war-path with manie braves, my brother was fain for alle his serious talk to lay hold of as many trenchers as he could carry, and order me to bring the bed, our mother following with her babe.

There came no Indians, and we went back i' th' home next day. But the spring was hard to bear. Robert did well; but one day i' th' last o' spring he came and did throw himself on th' floor in a sweat.

"Rose!" saith he, "there is but one hen with a whole sui of feathers," saith he. Indeed, a murrain had settled upon our poor fowls, giving them naked crops and backs which blistered i' th' sun. "And all th' maize be yellow," saith he. "There is no hill that is good and greene; and thou knowest how I have watered it!"

It was a hot afternoon, with a shore wind. Our mother's hair clung to her pretty temples in littel damp rings, as she sewed at th' bed valence, sweet with lavender—our mother was e'er dainty in bedding.

"Lie, rest, my good lad," saith she. "When th' sun's down Rose and I will help carry water. I know how to dig about th' roots. Thou shalt not lose thy maize!" And she smiled tremulously as one's still civil to acquaintance on th' day of one's distress.

When that it was coole, our mother was as good as a' word, carrying full piggins from th' spring with haste for fear o' th' babe's awakening. After shoes were bad and they did tear upon the stony dirt, th' skin reddening i' th' slits; but so she only flew the faster, her arms straining with her loads. Then would she fall to and dig, while th' damp settled, and th' frogs i' th' pools clamoured. And then in, when we could see a bade no more, with hand at her back, bedraggled and footsore, but with kinde white looks at Robert and me as we raked th' ashes off th' stick and warmed th' bread.

But our maize was ne'er to be harvested. Another fell story came to Hampton of more Indians coming from inland. Anell I wot how my mother paled and screeched "Robert! Robert!" when the naybur body told it, smoothing her pinners by oure hearthe. My brother rushed in from th' patch; but he saw, and I did, 'twas our father she was calling.

I sat me down to spin next day, my stint being marked for me. 'Twas a fayre morning, and Robert, outside, went back and forth like th' shuttle i' th' web i' our field. And mother she put on th' crape shawl—'twas foreign, and flowered most beautifully—and taking th' babe in her arms, she starts for th' beach for an airing. I can see her yet when I close my eyes—slender, of a willowy shape, hurrying arcoss th' fields i' th' salt ayre—th' little white bundle in her arms.

Now, she did go to a hairy captain of a great smack i' the harbour, and says she with a curtsey—our mother was aye mannerlie:

"I am Robert Moody's wife and I have in mind to live at th' shoals. Wilt carry out my gear?"

But he looked with a weary face at my littel mother.

"Best stay on th' mainland, good wife! Thou dost not know what is life on th' Shoals! Thou canst not help pull in a trawl!" said the man.

"No, but my son can," said our mother quickly, and lifting her timid eyes. "He is fifteen, and brawny."

"Oh, if thy son can work!" said th' captain. And th' bargain was clinched by th' crape shawl for 's dame.

Oure mother did plan this flitting because those seven islands, nine miles from land, had been a sure refuge from red men. Dreadful folke of th' seas went there, but Indians never.

In another weeke we were far from our hollyoaks and our dear rustical porch. The Toppans o' th' Garrison House helped us off, even running with a

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flitch of bacon when we were upon th' load, Mr. Toppan seeming in a browne studdy over my mother's glittering eyes; but he said nothing. Our gear was woefullie broken in th' handling, Robert breaking the green beaker as we crowded upon th' smack—he having th' glass in 's hands for safety. Oh, th' intolerable smells of our craft as we went rockin' and dipping over th' green waves! We could say but naught and cover our heads close as th' sailors advised for sickness, till at length, when Robert and I came up for breath like fishes, lo! great and small fields before and round us set upon the sea like th' stones i' th' splendid ring upon Lady Pickering's finger. But, alas! Hampton was now a littel rimme of a wurld of water.

Our home on th' Shoals was a close chamber of a miserable hut, our bed with its hangings occupying half th' space. Onlie one pane i' the casement, and that upon a prospect, oh, dolefulle! of th' deep seas. We all thinned for th' swete fresh ayre of Hampton, and th' cleanliness and th' quiet and th' pleasant smells, sights and sounds. Our mother satte alle day at her wheel, and I at her feet, hetchelling flax and tow. And th' puny babe between us, minded too little sometimes. Then would come in Robert, with a great fish perchance, or a kettle of clams, and would take up th' precious mite into hi leathern jerkin, not o'er clean to touch, and kiss and hug her till th' tiny maid's frocks were alle rumpled. 'Twas plain to see this wild life suited Robert. He liked th' sea. But tho' th' life pleased him, it harmed him, foul words beginning to stick in 's memory and fall from 's tongue.

The end came. One night we were stirred from sleep by a horrible face at our casement. 'Twas of a foul m n, drunk ever, and sprawled upon th' rocks continuallie—'twas sayd he was to have been hanged on the land, and did never dare step off the Shoals.

"Wake, woman!" bellowed th' harsh voice. "Look, all of ye."

And as we huddled at th' casement he pointed o'er th' heaving waters, reflecting a full moon to a flock of canoes like swimming birds. We could see dark forms i' them, steering with arrowy paddles.

"Oh, what shall I do?" shrieked our mother. "Oh, what shall I do?"

"Do?" yelled th' man; "hide thee! Hark ye! Hark ye! There's no time for boats, but there's a clift i' th' rocks back o' th' fish house. Thou'll know it by th' big balanced rock where th' babes play with kickshaws; 'tis below." And th' face was withdrawn.

"And thou?" I screamed after him.

"God a mercy, wench!" cried he, as he ran to other houses; "there be forty lurking places on Star."

How ghost-like were th' rocks; and th' booming sea was frightfullie neare this crevice to which we crept upon ouro knees, letting each th' other down painfullie therein. Our mother drew herself in as far as she could, lying flat and face down upon th' slimy floor. I next, pressed close, and Robert valiantlie near th' mouthe of th' poor rift; 'twas soe small we were scarcely out of th' moonlight. So we crouched and quivered together till awful sounds began to rise, somewhat dulled by th' dashing waves anext us. Then Robert did creep in more, and our mother pushed us both to th' farthest and she, with th' babe, did lie upon us, guarding us.

But now th' poore babe unable to move its legs, and half-smothered in our mother's kirtle, began to roar lustilie. Oh, th' horror o' th' time! Again and again our mother tried to feed it, but it would not eat, and its cries were shriller and more shrill. We both turned in an agonie to look toward the unconscious little thing that was calling death our way; but our mother writhed herself out o' th' cave, went headlong forth into th' pit at 's mouth; then back anew upon us, trying with more than mortal endeavour, to still th' child; then forth again. Then a sharp wail, like a cat's cry when it is grasped by th' legs for killing, a thud, a shower of warm drops and flinty bits in oure faces, and oure mother drew herself in alone.

I cannot tell how terrible that night was! By times th' redskin went scamper ng and yelling o'er the rocks, smells of smoke drifting down e'en to us. Robert would put up a cold hand, touching us for companionship. But our mother replied naught in kind, as she lay upon us' her whole length, making no sound, whether a sigh or a groan; but drawing long breath ever and anon, like one that is coming back to life.

'Twas light enow to see each th' other's face when she did draw herself out o' th' cave. All noise had long ceased. We children following, stiff, sore, and appalled, came upon her wordless, with a blood-stained bundle i' her lap.

Then up started she and darted out o' th' rift like a flame to th' smoking town. Alack! Our kind heralde had found no lurking place. Robert stumbled o'er him in th' ashes. Shoalers were landing from other islands, and to them our sad mother went straightwaie with her story, sparing herself not at all. I have seen death, but never have I seen anie sight so woefull as her drawn, tortured mouth and th' tale coming from lips that refused to c ose over her teeth.

There was silence; but 'twas dreadfull to see how all fe l awaie from our deare littel mother.

When the tiny body was wrapped i' my kirtle waiting with th' other dead for th' trench to be deep enow, he did look fearfullie upon it with a long, shuddering "How could I?" and then clasping us wildly, "How could I not?"

A great armed dame from Smutty Nose opened wide her arms to our mother's littel figure, drawing her into them from our clinging hands and kisses.

"Thou poore soule!" saith she. "'Twas human nature," saith she. "By Heaven!" swore she, slapping a thigh roundly with her mighty hand. "There be not a mother on th' islands who would not have done th' same were she valiant enow; and yet—thou poor mouse!" and th' big mannish dame cried over my mother's hidden pretty head. And when all's o'er, 'tis she who leads my mother to a boat.

'Twas pitifull, oure mother's meekenesse amid universal blame; for when they did rebuild on Star nobody bade us return—day by day th' dames paddled over from Smutty Nose to watch th' progress of their new huts, and never a word to us—to our red-faced dame's high and loud displeasure.

Soe, as 'twas plain my mother was thought a piece of ill-luck and dreaded upon th' Shoals, we came again into the white curve of Hampton Bay, this time gearless as well as houseless, but by favour of th' Toppans, getting into our small home again in th' calm inland. Methinks I never knew how sweete a picture is th' country till I saw it then, after soe much paine. Th' sun shown with yellow light on th' mown grass and men were threshing th' nut trees and children and women were putting' the nuts in baskets. And Mistress Toppan

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sent in honey i' the comb and bread hot o' th' oven to our supper. She sent it. Good-wife nor maiden came much to us then nor thereafter.

"Sis," saith Robert one day, stretched out like a wild beast along th' limb of our apple-tree, "dost know that th' court in Portsmouth are to find a true bill against mother?"

"What true bill?" I cried, feeling frozen.

"For th'—th' baby," stammered my brother. "And oh! to think I am strong; and my poore mother soe littel and weak, to hang!" and he stopped, choking.

"Thee need'st not fear that, lad," said Mr. Toppan's mellow, friendly voice behind us. We started, and Robert tried to hide 's tears. "I saw to a verity thy poore mother was distracted before she left us," saith he; "and I am much to blame that e'er I allowed her out o' my wife's sight."

Robert looked at him with a glance of his dark eyes like a caress. Sweet words were seldom on Robert's lips—they were hidden treasures for our mother alwaies—but the darting glance was thanks.

"I know, lad! I know!" saith Mr. Toppan, sighing. And again softly, "I know!"

People did not gossip of us long neither, leaving us to our shrinking selves by reason of a grand new arrival in Hampton—an officer from South, with a band of black footmen, and beginning the finest wooden house o' th' land around, set on a hill, and visible white and statelie from th' sea. 'Twas painted a white; the onlie painted house inne New England. General Moulton loitered about Hampton as his house built, spending doubloons. He never bargained, 'twas said. Did he have a need of aniething, 'twas bought, and no questions of price. These things would Robert and I heare when at work in barn and kitchen, soe few came to sit by mother on oure settle, where she sat all day long ailing. Not forty, and yet with streaks in her hair, and a looke in her eyes not to be worded.

A day in May, while mother and I were sprinkling th' darke, ill-smelling linen on our bleach-ground, there rides up th' general, in black velvet. His lips were thick, and his nostrils wide, but he was comely.

"Art thou th' dame who maketh linen sheeting?" saith he; "I do desire a web."

My mother was overjoyed at so greate an order—we had none too much i' the cupboard—and she hurried around her web on th' grass, patting and praising it and babbling with more liveliness than for a yeare, of its merits and its defects. But th' gentleman was silent, looking at me instead o' th' linen.

As we sat in the gloaming, came a black with curds and creams neatlie layd upon a silver dish "for Mistress Rose Moody." I cared more for the fayre dish than th' curds, and even mother liked to trye a littel off th' embossed side o' th' platter, Robert finishing all, with a boy's greediness.

'Twas thus th' next daye and next. And by th' next th' old wives i' all Hampton grew nayburly, but th' maids did seem thrice distant and cold to me.

Th' next was wild weather; th' rain that th' wind drove aslant our lattice freezing i' th' falling. Robert had been forth, and did sit steaming on th' hearth, mending's fork as he dried. And our mother upon th' settle in a thick coverlet. 'Twas dull i' th' room and, not over-warm neither. And I at th' loom.

There came th' sound of horse's feet and a knock, and General Moulton in our porch bowing low, cobwebby, soaked lace falling down over 's strong white hands as he doffed his hat to me. But Robert was soure and looked not from th' fork-teeth.

"Sweetheart," saith the general, following me to th' loom across th' uneven floor, "wilt wed with me? Thou must go with thy linen."

My dry tongue let me talke not, but love and loyaltie to our mother stirred Robert.

"General Moulton," saith he, with a flaming face, "dost know who thou'rt asking? Hampton doth set us apart," saith he bitterlie.

"And why?" saith the general fiercely. "Thy mother could not hurt a flea commonlie. Who can say what he will doe in a fearfull peril? She will be my mother, and she will come and see us happy; it may tend to make her soe. Ay," saith he, "sweet Rose, wilt come upon th' hill, thou, and th' mother, and Robert?"

Robert looked at me jealouslie. "I shall earn a man's wage i' th' year," he muttered tremulouslie. 'Twas not a moment! and yet we did read each th' other i' that glance. He dropped his eyes.

"Rose is good," came quietlie, yet to start one, from th' settle, where my mother sat in a strange unmannerlie silence. "And thou art good to love our poore Rose—my girl that hath no gear but a mother's shame!"

And she hid her thin face, trembling and tearlesse.

* * * * *

'Tis nine years I have been General Moulton's dame. From my great room I look off o'er the breathlesslie quiet countrie to the banks o' sunsmitten clouds sailing landwards. 'Tis th' same landskip.

Am I happy? I should be; for Robert by General Moulton's favor hath an education and a shippe.

Methinks, at times, old Cæsar knoweth th' general better than his wife doth. My husband goeth awaie yearlie for weekes, and on's return seemeth to adapt himself to a new life. I have found there be spaces of his mind where he chooses to be alone. I make no comment. He hath raised me to a fair station—as high as of anie private gentlewoman of th' colonies.

But once, a wild-looking man came for entertainment. He was a practiser of th' black art—it was soe sayd—and as I handed him a cup of amber drink in th' porch I did beg him for my fortune.

"Thou hast had a strange one," saith he, viewing me strangelie. "Thou art here i' the warm world. Ask nothing further."

But I pestered, and would not be gainsayed. But, at last, up waves he his empty cup.

"Look, an' thou must!" saith he. "Thy will must be my law in thine own house."

Alack! th' rim of th' cup expanded and parted, and there was my husband sitting in my fayre room, but wrinkled; and a handsome girl hung about him. Then all became blurred like an image i' a stirred pool, and I was but staring into th' cup.

"Thy husband is to be twice matched," said th' man grimlie, and with a mocking reverence.

I wish I had not looked i' th' cup. And yet th' black art is fiends' pleasure. God rules. And still, would I had not this to think of; for I love th' day and my house, and th' ordering o' my maids.

Down i' th' graveyard mother's mound is greene. Mayhap she did feel this once, in her turne.

The fashion of this wurld passeth awaie.

M. Moulton.

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THE OWNER OF "VARNHAGEN."

HAVING seen the vanity of most earthly things, Sir Peveril Wynter, diplomatist and sportsman, had the idea that other people might like to see it too, and to that end set about writing his reminiscences. Fate directed that I, Rosalys Brown, of Miss Wiggins' Typewriting Bureau, in Cockspur Street, should be selected as his amanuensis, and so, from ten to four each day for some time, I "took down" the aged baronet at the gloomy old family mansion in Brook Street.

That is to say, I dutifully sat, pencil and note-book in hand, prepared to perform my part of the contract, for a certain number of hours each day; but my temporary employer preferred the excitement of quarrelling with his two sons, Mr. Arthur and Mr. Guy, abusing his doctor, storming at his man, and generally providing a little wholesome fillip for the household, to proceeding with the task in hand.

In this way I had ample time to look about me, and being a young person of some observation, I quickly came to some interesting conclusions.

First, I discovered that I disliked Mr. Guy, and liked Mr. Arthur. (Mind, I merely said "liked.") Their estimable parent, be it noted, disliked them both with impartial thoroughness. Lady Wynter was a pale-haired nonentity with a perpetual cold, who did not count in the house, and merely put in a perfunctory "Oh, Peveril!" when the old man was particularly violent in his denunciation of the rest of the *menage*.

I could not quite make out Dr. O'Connor, the baronet's medical attendant. He was quite young, rather handsome in a dark, Celtic way, and his manner was boisterous out of Sir Peveril's room, and flippant inside it. He used to come every day, for the old man was possessed with the idea that he was fast sinking into the grave, and that nothing but the most assiduous care would keep him out of it for very long. He seemed to look forward to the doctor's visits, though he very often abused him thoroughly while they lasted.

"Thank goodness you've come, O'Connor," he would growl. "My two dutiful sons have been in, with faces as long as from here to Pall Mall, boring me to death. Come on; say something to make me laugh, or you won't come here again." This was when he was in a particularly good humour.

One thing that struck me as strange about this peculiar household was that Dr. O'Connor and Mr. Guy were always—in common phrase—as "thick as thieves," behind Sir Peveril's back, while the doctor, wth true Celtic pliability, did not hesitate to cordially concur in anything derogatory which his interesting patient might utter against the young man. I set myself to pierce the meaning of this odd friendship between the youthful doctor and his patient's son. Mr. Arthur, I discovered, treated O'Connor as a mere piece of furniture; which did not enhance his popularity in that direction. One thing united father, son, and medico—and that was a passionate love of sport, especially racing. "Varnhagen," the pick and pride of Sir Peveril's stables, was entered for the forthcoming Derby; and I never heard so much horse-talk in my life as I did during the days I spent at the Brook Street house. Nor was Sir Peverli the least eager and animated of the party when the conversation veered round to the inevitable subject.

The social barometer at Sir Peveril's generally pointed to "unsettled," but the great storm burst soon after my arrival. Dr. O'Connor, lounging in his usual free-and-easy manner at the side of Sir Peveril's couch, was entertaining him with some spiteful gossip from the clubs, the old man, huddled among his pillows, looking, as usual, as if nothing about him were living but his scornful and piercing black eyes. The doctor, gliding without a change of tone, from one subject to another, dropped a brief remark, which made Sir Peveril's withered face work convulsively.

"Is that so?" he asked, in a harsh whisper.

"I'm told so on very good authority," laughed the doctor carelessly, while his eyes glittered with malice.

"We'll see," growled the baronet. "Send Mr. Arthur to me, will you," he said to the man who answered his bell.

He took no notice of his son's greeting.

"What d'ye fancy for the Derby?" he asked abruptly, fixing his eagle's gaze on the young man's face.

The latter looked somewhat embarrassed.

"Well," he blurted out at last, "I rather think Quickstep has a chance."

"Ugh!" grunted his parent. "And you're backing it, I suppose?"

"Not exactly," said Mr. Arthur.

"Not exactly!" roared Sir Peveril, in a terrible voice. "What fool's talk is this? Why aren't you backing our own horse, ye unnatural young hound? What d'ye mean by it? Isn't a horse from your own father's stables good enough? Why don't you fancy Varnhagen? Will you be so good as to tell me?"

"I can't help it," said the young man desperately, while a troubled look came into his clear blue eyes. "I simply don't think Varnhagen can win. But all the same, I wouldn't think of backing anything else—much as I need money."

"That's a lie!" shouted his venerable sire. "Get out of my sight, will you? Young monster, trying to spoil the market for your own father! Pretty pair of son's I've got! Guy's a brute, and you're a fool, and worse!"

Exhausted with passion, the baronet sank down among his pillows, while his son, pallid to the lips, turned without a word and left the room. I never admired Mr. Arthur so much as at that moment. He quivered under his terrible old father's reiterated insults as if they were blows, but controlled himself sufficiently to refrain from reply. The doctor had discreetly strolled to the window during the brief scene between father and son, and I could see his shoulders shaking with ill-suppressed mirth. Once more I puzzled over the obvious dislike he bore for Mr. Arthur. After this interview he and the other brother appeared more intimate than ever, and one would frequently find them in earnest converse. They were an ill-assorted pair;

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Dr. O'Connor clever, sardonic, witty, the other heavy, dull, and silent.

I only remember one remark with which he honoured me.

"I say, you're lookin' rippin' to-day," he was pleased to observe, after a prolonged inspection of my appearance. After which he proceeded to demonstrate his approval in a practical manner, for which he got his face severely slapped.

"Serve you right, young man," said O'Connor, coming out of Sir Peveril's room at the moment when I administered the chastisement. They called each other by their christian names these two. "Come on, don't be a fool, Guy," the doctor went on, taking his interesting friend's arm, and leading him away.

Derby Day came in the usual order of things. Shall I ever forget it? I turned up at Brook Street at ten o'clock, having received no instructions to the contrary.

As I anticipated, there was not much work to do. Sir Peveril was in a state of nervous excitement, which made him peculiarly cantankerous; and if all the wishes he uttered concerning the Brook Street household had been promptly attended to, the end of all parties concerned would have been more dramatic than pleasing. I met Mr. Arthur on the steps. His usually sunny face was somewhat clouded, but he greeted me with no lack of cheer.

"Well," said he, "I'm off to Epsom to see poor old Varnhagen beaten." This in the most flippant manner.

"I do hope it won't be," said I.

"Sure to be," answered my employer's son. "I'm sorry because the governor will be in such a bait about it. The poor old chap's set his heart on winning a Derby. Good-bye, Miss Brown," as the hansom jingled up.

To my surprise I found Mr. Guy at home. He and Dr. O'Connor lingered affectionately round the invalid baronet, bearing the avalanche of abuse which descended upon them with the constancy of martyrs. Gradually the old man grew weaker, his voice failed him as the morning wore on, and he could only rave in a husky whisper, and shake a waxen fist at his son and his medical man.

"Why do you excite yourself so, Peveril?" whispered his lady-wife in her feeble way. "You only tire yourself out, you know, and that's so bad for you."

It was about twelve o'clock when I went to fetch a book from the library. Shall I ever forget what I saw when I returned to Sir Peveril's room? The old man was lying back among his pillows motionless. O'Connor and Mr. Guy bent over him. Soon the former raised a pallid, awestricken face to Guy as I stood in the doorway, and I saw him form one word with his lips.

The son shuddered convulsively, and the two men walked towards the centre of the room.

"It's—it's fearfully sudden," muttered the son.

"I always knew that it would come like this, Sir Guy," the doctor whispered back, with an emphasis on the prefix.

"Shut up about that now," hissed the new baronet shuddering anew. "Let us tell them."

The doctor's face grew hard as granite.

"Not yet," he said, placing an hand on his friend's shoulder. "You forget."

"What? Speak out, man," replied Guy in his heavy way, searching the other's face with his dull eyes.

I felt sick with horror and excitement, my heart thumped as if it would burst my ribs.

But I looked and listened—listened and looked, with tense attention.

"If the nominator of a horse dies before the race is run—" began O'Connor, as if he were impressing a lesson on a child—"the nomination is void, and—"

"I know all that," interrupted the other. "But—"

"Look here," said the doctor sharply. "If Varnhagen does not win this Derby, I am ruined. It may matter little to you, but I am a poor medical man, and I have invested my all in this horse. I fancy you see why I cannot afford to let this be known till after the race is run. You will help me, of course?"

"I won't," snapped Guy sullenly.

"I tell you you will," hissed O'Connor, with a savagery in look and tone that froze the blood round my heart. They were blind and deaf to everything, so I slipped softly as a cat into a curtained window-seat, whence I could see and hear.

This is what I saw. The door was locked. Then the doctor and the other villain lifted the inanimate body of the baronet into a large easy-chair, which they wheeled to the window. The drooping head was supported by pillows, and the hand folded in as natural a manner as might be on the lap. The windows stood wide open, and any passenger in the street might easily see Sir Peveril Wynter calmly enjoying the balmy noontide air, and looking remarkably well, considering his great age, and invalid condition.

The son was moaning and shivering with horror as he went about his hideous task, but the other ghoul was perfectly calm. His breath came somewhat thickly, and one drop of moisture glittered on his pallid forehead, but that was all.

"Bah! How white he is!" muttered the doctor, as he contemplated the still figure in the chair. There were geraniums in the window-boxes. O'Connor took some of the vivid petals and crushed them in his hands. Then, as his accomplice turned away with a sob of horror and covered his face, the doctor coolly smeared the marble cheeks with the colour thus obtained. I with difficulty repressed a desire to scream aloud at the utter brutal callousness of the villain.

Then, taking chairs as far away from the window as possible, this precious pair began their watch, fortified with a decanter of brandy.

How those hours of horror dragged away I cannot tell. I thought I was going mad. Fearful of attracting the attention of the two men, I was forced to remain well-nigh as motionless as the figure at the window. The physical agony of cramp was added to the mental torture I was undergoing.

It seemed endless days before an excited newspaper-boy dashed down the quiet street, waving a contents bill like a banner.

"Derby winner! Speshul!" he shouted.

"What's won, boy?" cried the doctor, tossing him a coin.

"Varnhagen, Quickstep, Salerno—one, two, free, sir."

A loud gasp of relief burst from Guy.

The doctor wiped his pale forehead.

Old General Brent came stamping along the pavement.

"Afternoon, Sir Peveril!" cried the old warrior, waving a buckskin glove at the window. "Glad to see you looking so well."

"That's one outside witness," muttered O'Connor, with a sinister smile.

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"Don't," whimpered his accomplice, feebly. "Who'll tell 'em now?"

"Leave it to me," said the doctor, striding from the room. Then everything reeled about me, darkness fell, and I fainted.

* * * * *

My bewildered senses could hardly grasp the meaning of the strange scene I found being enacted when I recovered from my silly fainting-fit.

The room was filled with people—or so it seemed to me, in my dazed state.

"Better now?" whispered a voice in my ear. It was Mr. Arthur, who, with the tenderness of a woman was bending over me.

I pushed him away.

"Don't," I said ungratefully, though I felt extremely weak, and greatly inclined to burst into tears. "Poor Sir Peveril——"

"Hush, it's all right," said Mr. Arthur soothingly.

And then a well-known voice fell on my ears.

It was Sir Peveril's.

The old man was sitting in his accustomed place, his eyes bright and piercing as ever, were fixed on the tall, defiant figure of O'Connor, who stood with folded arms in the centre of the room, looking his patient steadily in the face. He was deadly pale, but his lips wore their own habitual sneer, while such malignity burnt in his eyes as made one's blood run cold.

"Fool," said Sir Peveril, in a harsh whisper, "you, who pretend to medical knowledge, cannot tell catalepsy from—the other thing! Gone, was I? Dead, eh? And I heard every word you pair of blackguards were saying. Move, or speak, I could not, but I could hear—ha! I could hear, and much too plainly for some people's convenience. Now get out of my sight, you carrion crow!"

I did not hear the rest of the baronet's little oration for here I quietly fainted again.

I believe, however, that those interested in such subjects will find a more detailed account of the case in Professor Haydon's very learned and exhaustive work on "Catalepsy and Apparent Death," published a few years back, in two portly octavo volumes. I have told all that I know about it, just exactly as it occurred

V. Dryden.

A Dusky Heroine.

Whenever I hear a man say that he would like to have the experience of a ride by the side of the driver of a railway locomotive, a little shiver passes through me as I remember my own. It is a long time since that adventure, but the recollection of it is still vivid; and this is not to be wondered at, considering the exceptional character of the ride.

It is scarcely necessary to say that I was a young man, for older men rarely have the energy that takes them into such circumstances. My love of adventure had made me ship before the mast, and it made me leave the ship and try a cruise ashore in the company of a young French sailor; then it came about that we found ourselves in Algeria at a time when the French were having trouble with the natives, and the services of two likely young fellows were accepted at once.

Like a genuine British tar, I soon made friends with my comrades, who just as quickly forgot their prejudice against Albion, so far as I was concerned, and taught me a little of their own tongue and a little of the native lingo which they had picked up.

I was sent up country a bit to take part in the scrimmages with the Kabyles, and very soon had all I wanted in the way of fighting.

It was not very entertaining work after the novelty had worn off; we had chiefly to protect the lines of communication as best we could—the railway lines and telegraph wires, and so on—with no fight of a bigger sort than a skirmish. I had a great contempt for the savages, when I began, but I was compelled to admire their bravery and certain other good qualities; and, although they were not angels, I asked myself why I had mixed in the quarrel between them and the French. It certainly did not concern me.

This train of thought led me to side with the Kabyles to some extent; that is, I did what I could to soften the harshness of the treatment meted out to them by my comrades on occasions. As for myself, I have let a man off with a hiding instead of a piece of lead or a few inches of steel, after having explained to him in a mixed lingo that he had better let others do railway and telegraph engineering work in future.

One day a small party of six, including myself, came upon a man who seemed to be tampering with the rails round a bend, and of course he was seized and interrogated. He insisted that he was not guilty of the charge, that he was doing something very innocent—I didn't understand enough to know what he was saying exactly—and that he was not a warrior, owing to a slight lameness.

My comrades laughed, saying that lameness did not prevent a man from doing harm in other ways than fighting; they were incensed by the murder of a soldier on the previous day, and were determined to wreak vengeance upon all who fell into their hands. In spite of the protests of the native, they tied him to a tree and made ready to shoot him.

Now I believed the fellow's story; I felt certain that he had not been tampering with the rails on that occasion; there was something about the man's face that took my fancy and made me accept his denial. He had a noble mien. I was convinced that he would have scorned to deny the act had he really committed it, or about to do so. A cursory examination of the rails showed me that nothing had actually been done. I made up my mind to intercede.

But I became angry when I found that they intended to have some sport; they intended to fire separately at him, not to kill him, but to wound or to terrify him by firing at points close to his body. That made my blood

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hot and I stepped deliberately in front of the human target and dared them to fire.

I had my own rifle against my shoulder in a twinkling, and the men knew enough of my character to understand that it would not be safe to defy me. So we had a parley, and in the end the native was allowed to go free. He thanked me with stately dignity, and limped away.

I imagined that I should be court-martialled, but my comrades did not report the incident, probably fearing that they might be punished for cruelty—for that sort of thing was not permitted officially, although it may have been winked at sometimes, when it was done quietly.

That act of kindness was repaid to me not long afterwards, as I will explain.

I was one of a small detachment sent farther inland, some six days later, to quell an outbreak in a part that had been quiet till then. We found the task a much tougher one than was anticipated, and had to ask for more men. We found ourselves split up and continually fighting.

About a score of us were fairly cornered in a hastily constructed "fort," without provisions, and with precious little ammunition. We held the Kabyles at bay till they managed to fire the woodwork of which our "walls" were chiefly composed, and then we had to make a sortie and fight for it.

I do not know what became of my comrades, but I fear that they were all killed. I fought like a demon and forced a passage through the enemy, but just as I thought I had got clear, I fancied that something went wrong with my head, and I did not remember any more till I found myself bound and in an upright position.

It did not take long for full consciousness to come back, although my head throbbed and ached, and there was a crowd of Kabyles round me, making a most awful row.

Judge of my surprise on discovering that I was standing in the cab of a locomotive, bound to the side by a strong rope that must have been of European manufacture. No trucks were attached to the engine, but the driver was at his post, ready to move the lever and set it going. What did it mean?

Seeing that I had recovered my senses, the natives became more merry than ever, and began to bustle about in a manner that suggested preparation for a festival. My first notion was that they intended to make the driver go slowly while they took pot shots at me; then it occurred to me that they would send us both along the line to a spot where the rails had been taken up, and so bring about our death. The driver would have more chance than I, but I supposed that the Kabyles would take care that he did not escape. Still, it would be more agreeable to be dispatched by a spear or a ball than to lie helpless in the cab of an overturned engine and be scalded to death, for instance. I looked towards the driver again, hoping that he would glance round at me and so give me an idea of what was to happen, but he remained motionless.

Presently a native clambered on the engine and gave some orders in a low tone to the driver. The latter moved the lever and the native made haste to jump off, falling in a heap on the ground. Notwithstanding my terrible position I laughed, which drew a howl of rage from the mob.

The engine moved slowly forward, and the driver turned for the first time and came towards me. But he did not look at me as he walked to the edge.

"What does it all mean?" I inquired in French.

"It means that the engine will gather speed every second and take you to that bridge," he replied, without turning his head. "I could not help it; they forced me and would have killed me as well as you if I had not agreed to work the lever."

Then he jumped off the moving engine and I was left to conjecture concerning my fate when the bridge was reached.

In such moments as those, how rapidly do one's thoughts chase each other through the mind. I saw, mentally, that the train had been captured and its protectors killed or driven to flight; the man who was needed to set the engine in motion had been caught and his life spared for some purpose; then I had fallen into their hands—the one whom they evidently remembered as having been responsible for the deaths of several of their number, the only one of the little band who had cut through their lines, and they had devised a horrible death for me.

I knew what he meant by the bridge. The metals had been laid across a chasm by means of wooden supports in the form of high trees, further supports had been provided by using other trees as crutches, sloping from a lower level in the sides of the rock to the trees on which the metals rested. It was a rough affair, but it served the purpose, and care had been taken that the strain should not be too heavy. There were no cross pieces so you looked down between the lines, and outside them, into the depths of the chasm.

This bridge had been weakened or destroyed, then, and I was to be dashed into the abyss! As I realised this horrible fact, I returned to my immediate surroundings; all these reflections had passed through my brain very rapidly and the engine had only carried me a few yards from the natives. It was getting up speed, however, and I should soon be at the bridge. I tried to think how far off it was, but I could not recall the distance.

What was that? For a second a thrill of fear shot through me, and my heart seemed to stop beating. Something had scrambled along the floor of the cab, or had clambered on to it. The natives raised a shout, and the next instant there arose from the floor a form that stood before me as a Kabyle girl, panting from excitement and want of breath. I forgot all in my amazement and stared at her.

I had not rescued any lovely native maiden, and knew nothing of this one. I must be dreaming or mad.

A cry came from the girl's lips as she felt in her belt.

"I have dropped it! I have lost my knife!" she moaned, and sank on her knees in despair.

I understood some of the words, and they were sufficient to make the meaning clear to me. I shall give her remarks in intellectual language, but I will state here that they were made in a mixture of language which it would be futile to reproduce.

The engine had now gained momentum and was rattling along. I comprehended that she had clambered on to the floor of the cab at the risk of her life in order to save mine. The natives were not attempting to follow, possibly because they regarded our deaths as certain in any case.

"Turn the lever!" I commanded, seeing a chance of safety. I spoke in English, forgetting myself in the excitement of the situation. Of course she shook her head. I tried to tell her what to do in the medley of tongues generally used by me, but this command required

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more precision of speech than the mere asking of food, especially as I could not back it up by gestures.

"The bridge is burning—you will die!"

I understood *that*, but the thought of death was lost in the admiration I felt at the fact that she did not mention herself. What had I done to merit such devotion?

"Jump off!" I cried, shaking my head violently to emphasise my meaning.

She made a negative sign. I tried to tell her what to do with the lever, using copious details, and at length I succeeded. She went closer and pointed to it, then moved her finger in different directions till I nodded affirmatively. I heaved a sigh; there was yet hope of life.

But she could not turn it. The engine was an old thing, and either the lever had got wedged or the driver had done it on purpose. She flung herself on her knees in front of me and began to gnaw at the cords that bound me.

I had no knife about me which she could find and use. I strained at the cords in vain. I knew that at the rate we were going we must soon reach the bridge; it was all over with me.

"Jump off while you can!" I cried once more, even though I recognised that it meant death or mutilation to do so.

"You saved my father! I asked them to let you go; they refused. I save you!"

So she was his daughter! But she could not save me.

She was tugging at the knot now with her lovely white teeth and her slim fingers alternately. They had been well tied, those cords! I turned my head to look ahead and my heart throbbed more quickly as I caught sight of a thin column of smoke. That was the bridge—and there was death!

"Pull!" I shouted frantically. Now that the end was so near I clung to life.

She tugged with teeth, fingers, and nails till the blood came, and all the time we were rushing to destruction. Heavens! a knot was giving! A piece of stick lay on the floor, and this she used instead of her fingers as soon as there was space to insert the end. One knot undone, but the engine getting nearer and nearer the bridge. She worked frantically and I writhed in agony at my helplessness; we were rushing to destruction, yet I could do nothing.

Another knot, but we were close to the bridge, and there was yet a third knot to untie. The girl tore at it with her teeth, while I kept my eyes fixed on the rapidly nearing bridge and my senses on the tension of the cord. Was there yet a chance? I felt the cord give a little, and I shrivelled myself, as it were, to gain space to withdraw my arm. Hurrah! I shouted as I dragged an arm free, tearing the sleeve from the shoulder.

Only a short distance from the chasm now. I could see that the metals were still in position, but the supports were burning, and I could not expect that the engine would go over safely. The natives must have smeared those huge trunks with some substance that would enable the flames to get a firm hold.

Both arms free! It was the work of an instant to get out of the cord, but that instant had brought us to the bridge and the engine rushed on to the single line that spanned the chasm amid the flames. I freed myself from my bonds as we left the solid ground, and at the same moment the girl gave a terrified cry and jumped. I could not stop her, and she disappeared from my sight—for ever!

Crack! I took my only chance and sprang from the falling engine with the object of clutching at one length of line that still remained in position between the land and the upper end of its first crutch. Down, down, down! Oh, the horror of that second which seemed like eternity. I can recollect that I made a frantic clutch—and missed!

Down! But only for a yard, and then I gripped the sloping crutch, which was charred in places, but no longer burning. My desperate plight gave me strength, and I clambered up the support to the line and crawled along that to land.

I lost consciousness after that, and, as I discovered later, had an attack of brain fever. I was found by a company of soldiers and well cared for, and finally sent to a hospital near the coast. When I was well again I was conveyed to Marseilles with other invalids, and it was not long before I journeyed home, with the intention of settling down.

I often regret that I do not even know the name of the girl who gave her life out of gratitude for my having saved her father's. Perhaps he had been a helpless spectator of the preparations for sending me to destruction, and had seen his daughter go with me. Oh, yes, there is a good deal of heroism and nobility of character among such races!

A ride on a locomotive? Ugh! *Don't!*

George Day.

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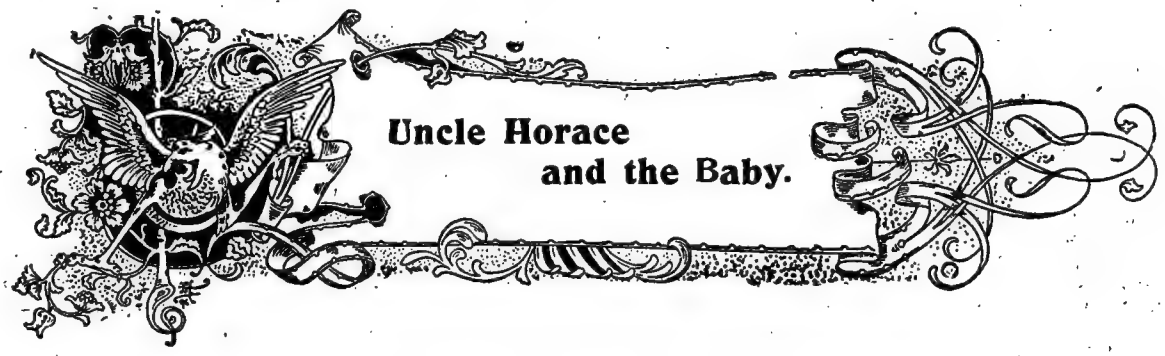

Uncle Horace and the Baby.

With the callousness of a bachelor, Horace declared that all babies looked alike to him—but that was before his sister Lill came home for a visit and brought her baby. The day she was to arrive Horace was even unkind enough to say that he would be glad to see Lill, but that he wished she would leave the baby behind. "A baby always keeps a house all stirred up," he complained; "they are either crying or hungry or sleepy or in some abnormal state, and you are expected to sympathise with all their woes." His mother only remarked severely, in reply, that he had once been a baby himself, and one of the very worst she had ever "brought up."

When the triumphant procession arrived, bringing Lill and the baby from the station, Horace kissed his sister and then stared at the white bundle in her arms.

"Now, I know you are simply dying to see the baby," she said, and began removing layers of gauze veiling from the face of the infant. When the little pink face was uncovered Horace nerved himself to look and think of some flattering remark that would satisfy the mother. He went up gingerly.

"By Jove! It's really pretty, isn't it?" he cried, in untactful surprise.

Lill and the other members of his family, from his father down, all looked at him resentfully:

"Of course it's pretty—it's a beautiful child!"

Horace tried to retrieve himself.

"I mean that it's nice to look at—not red and squashy-looking. It can open its eyes too, and it's all fuzzy on top of its head."

These unhappy observations only dragged him lower in the esteem of the family.

"Please call my baby 'she' and not 'it'!" Lill said resentfully. "You needn't be so surprised, either, because she is pretty!"

Horace tried to explain anew that he really admired the baby, but he was in disgrace. The family elbowed him away from the baby, and left him out of the conversation with ostentatious neglect.

But the baby—with the perversity of its sex—took a great fancy to uncle Horace. It soon preferred him to any other member of the family, and would even leave its mother's arms for his. When she saw him or heard his voice she smiled ecstatically and gurgled like a little brook. This sort of thing won Horace. From a stately indifference to his niece he came to be her wildest champion. He gave her all sorts of gifts, from a rattle to a tiny ruby ring; he learnt to talk the goo-goo language and he became a perfect nuisance in his whist club, where he would stop the lead while he told stories of the beauty and cleverness of the baby.

One evening Lill put the baby to sleep, turned the gas low in the room and went downstairs to join the family in the library. She stole upstairs again in about half an-hour to see if the child were covered and still sleeping. The family were startled by a shrill scream. Lill came flying down tairs to say that the baby was gone. Everybody said this could not be so, and they went upstairs with her to search for the baby, who couldn't walk and could only crawl across the room at about a snail's rate of locomotion. But the baby was gone, nevertheless. The family were quite sure no one had come in at the front door since Horace went out to his whist club, just after his sister had left the baby. Some kidnapper had stolen in by the back stairs or climbed over the porch—none of the family was really surprised that the baby had been stolen, for they believed so firmly in its beauty and cleverness that they were sure that everybody must covet it.

The grandfather hurried to the police-station, the aunts went out to give the alarm to the neighbours. Lill and her mother sat down alone by the empty cradle and gave themselves up to their grief. There was the sound of an opening door and footsteps on the stairs. Horace came into the room carrying the baby in his arms. It was wrapped in its cloak and a blanket.

"Oh, you've found my baby!" Lill cried. She and her mother implored him to tell how he had got it away from the kidnappers. They begged to know the story.

Horace was bewildered.

"Why," he said, "I just wrapped the baby up and slipped over to the whist club with her. I wanted to show her to the fellows. I was afraid you wouldn't let me take her if I asked, you are in such a fright about her. They thought her a little darling, too!"

"And so you were the one that took the baby?" Lill cried. "And you took her to the whist club in her nightgown? And I was nearly wild."

The other members of the family were sent for. The police were told they weren't wanted after all; and the neighbours were assured that the baby was safe.

Lill held the baby in her arms. Her mother and sisters stood on guard round her.

"To think, Horace," she said mournfully, "that you could take the baby over to your whist club in her nightgown, when she has a lovely real lace dress! How could you?"

Herbert Maxstead.

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DEAD TO THE WORLD

By Henry T. Johnson.

Author of "Cruce Vincit," "The Pride of the Ring," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

RICHARD SELDON (Tiger Dick), an escaped convict who murders and then impersonates Cyril Roylance, of Fallowfield Hall.
HARCOURT DALE, a near neighbour of Roylance.
DORIS DALE, his daughter.
JACK BRANSCOMBE, a young farmer, in love with Doris.
INSPECTOR ROSSITER, a detective from Scotland Yard.
REV. GERALD HASTIE, curate of Fallowfield.
JAMES and JOSEPH NUBBLEY, two brothers living in a cottage near the school at Fallowfield; they are known to Seldon.
MISS MORRISON, the schoolmistress.
MORGAN CHANDLER, the steward at Fallowfield Hall.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EARLY MORNING FIND.

YOUNG, strong, hale, and alert as Jack Branscombe was the stress of the struggle, the chase, the three successive immersions in the ice-cold river, and the desperate battle with its tide had begun to tell terribly plainly. His saturated garments hung and clung heavy as lead, close and dank as river weeds, his joints began to stiffen, his teeth chattered, his breath came and went in painful, fitful gasps, and something at his heart seemed strained almost to snapping point. But he pressed on almost mechanically, feeling rather than reasoning that there was danger in yielding to the impulse to fling himself to earth, and, lying there, let Fate work its will with him. It would never do to seek Gerry Hastie now, he vaguely reasoned. To do so would be to risk not only capture, but needless trouble for a true friend, embarrassment, perhaps serious trouble to Gerry. He must get clear of the district before he approached a railway station; yes, even before he bought clothes to replace the cold, soaking garments hanging and clinging to his limbs.

Therefore he pressed on doggedly, until at last Mother Nature, thwarting his plan as she often thwarts schemes less vague and more possible, had her say in the matter. She said little, but what she said was to the purpose. Simply, "Stop! Sink to earth! Lie there!" And Jack Branscombe, utterly exhausted, overwrought, dead beat, resistlessly obeyed. Down he crashed in the long lush grass of a pleasant meadow, his limbs giving way. He vaguely meant to lie there just a few minutes till strength and wind came back to him, only Nature said one more word, "Sleep!" and strive as he might, being mortal man he could not disobey. So slumber locked him fast until eastward the darkness began to lift, the grey softened to purple, the purple faded into lilac and great beams of gold and crimson came up and touched and tinged the clouds, and by-and-by the eastern sky was ablaze with gold and saffron glory. And the birds that had begun to twitter had left off twittering and had burst into joyous song. The dews were glittering in the strengthening sunlight, jewels innumerable adorning Nature's garb of greens, and browns, and golds, and from far off cottage chimneys, tiny red dots on the landscape, came tiny twirls of blue-white smoke and scent of burning wood.

Mary Morrison, wearing her stoutest laced boots and gathering her skirts, freely displaying, because no one was there to revel in the view of them, her exquisitely turned ankles, a big rush basket on her arm, set across the fields in quest of mushrooms and blackberries just as the sun began to rise. And before the sun was well above the skyline her dimpled hands were black, blue, and crimson, and her basket was a quarter filled with rich, glistening big berries of that black which is richest of all, whether in art or Nature, because of the red which it conceals, and another quarter with drab and creamy-coloured mushrooms, some stem uppermost, displaying recesses of rich red brown. As the schoolmistress rambled through the fields she caught the contagion of Nature's own waking gladness, the sun shone in her eyes and in her heart, and she sang blithely as if in answer to the morning carol of the birds.

And then all at once the song died on her lips, the light in her eyes, the bonnie pink in her comely cheeks.

"Merciful heavens!" she exclaimed. "What can this mean?"

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There, right at her feet in the long grasses a man was lying, his face upturned to the sky, lying there so still that for a moment she deemed that he was dead. Instantly terrible events of recent occurrence in the district flashed across her mind. Had she happened on the result of some new crime? But for all her gentleness, Mary Morrison, nerveless shadow of womanhood, her courage had been proved in many a crisis wherein her charges had been threatened by danger by infectious fever and other danger. In a moment she was on her knees beside the man lying there, raising his head in her hands.

"What has happened? Has there been an accident. Are you ill? Rouse yourself!" she cried. Then a colder chill clenched her heart as, gazing closer into the features, she recognised—

Jack Branscombe!

Yes! it was he, the suspected murderer for whom the hue and cry was rampant throughout the land. What should she do? Hasten back to the village and give the alarm? That seemed the first step dictated by human law, perhaps by justice. But another voice was speaking to the heart of Mary Morrison, humanity was whispering to womanhood.

"Speak, speak! Are you ill? Your forehead's like fire white as you are. You mustn't stay here, you'll die!"

Opening his eyes he cast a dazed look round.

"I won't be taken—I'm innocent!" he cried with a convulsive effort to struggle, then fell back with a groan, and his eyes dimly recognising her he said: "Am I dreaming? Through the whirling mist I see a face, a kind, sweet face that I seem to know."

"I'm Mary Morrison the schoolmistress."

"Oh, yes, yes; and you think I'm a thief and a murderer. You're sure of it; I read it in your eyes."

"No, no, law and justice insist those not proved to be guilty are innocent. Tell me, can I help you?"

"No, no, nobody can help me. All the world's against me."

"Don't think that; there is One Who rules all the world."

"And at times it has seemed to me that even He has forsaken me."

"No, no, you must never think anything so wicked as that. Tell me, can I help you? You are in a fever, your limbs are shivering with ague. What can I do?"

"Best leave me here to die. I don't want to bring trouble on others. I'm weary of it all, innocent though I am of what I'm charged with, let them take me, do what they will."

"You are innocent? I am glad to hear you say that. John Branscombe, because I've known and thought of you as a type of what was good and true in manhood."

"I swear it by all that is sacred, I swear that I am innocent."

"And I believe you. Come, let me help you. Do you think that leaning on my shoulder you could walk a little way. The school-house isn't far, I'll take you there."

Slowly, painfully, with her aid, he struggled to his feet and she helped him along the meadows, until at last they reached the little house adjoining the village school. By happy chance, no one was stirring, and unseen he entered the little sitting-room, fell heavily upon the couch, and fell into a stupor which lasted for many hours.

The schoolmistress had won for herself, in that quiet little old world village, renown as a capable and experienced nurse, and all that skill, care, and tenderness could suggest she did for him: but for many hours not even these could rouse him from that death-like torpor. For Nature was demanding the overdraft he had made on her.

And Mary Morrison's mind that day wandered from lessons to the patient locked in her little sitting-room, and when the day's work was done she bethought herself as to her duty. She needed counsel, the advice of a man, clear headed and capable, and she bethought herself of Gerald Hastie. Yes, she would tell him the whole story that night after evensong, and she set out for the little village church with that intent.

And the brothers Nubbley watched her leave the school-house with interest.

"Brother Joseph," said James, "what a remarkable good-looking young woman that is; how regular she goes to church. I should think, Joseph, that young woman had got a nice little bit of savings."

"Now James," said the invalid, looking up from his wheel chair, "don't you think of entangling yourself in matrimonial ventures, not as I think you'd stand a hundred to one chance in that quarter."

"No, brother Joseph," said the other in a tone of pensive reflection, "only I was a thinkin' as 'ow if anybody was to drop into the school-house while that little lady was going to church, like the well regulated young woman she is, it wouldn't be surprising if they was to find a cash-box or something in her writing-desk, and a substantial little nest egg in it. Ah, me, my brother, what a pity it is as you're so afflicted and that in these 'ere little villages there's such a lot of busybodies about as having such a little business of their own to see arter has such a lot of time to poke their noses into other people's."

And brother Joseph from the wheel chair sighed softly and sympathetically.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Recognition.

Dim patches in the night gloom the oriel windows of the village church gleamed, from within came at times the floating swell and dying wail of the organ, ever and anon clear voices in unison chanted prayer or praise.

And once, from where he watched in the shadow of the yews, a man standing there alone heard from within a voice declaring:

"The wages of sin is death," and he muttered with an evil sneer: "That's why everybody dies!"

Clear through the evening gloom a childish treble voice soared heavenwards alone, followed by a burst of harmony as other voices joining, took up the anthem strain. And then the voices died away.

And the man who listened there in the gloom of the night and in the darkness of his sin hardened his heart, and yet some secret spell retained him there to listen.

"Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay the innocent."

"Amen."

In rebellious thought he was scoffing there at all he listened to, and yet he stayed and listened until one final burst of sound from the organ and one last lingering "Amen" floated through the open porch, then was followed by the feet of returning worshippers. Then he slunk away—to wait further away in other shadows.

Gerald Hastie, striding after the service through the little God's Acre, was wondering why his plan had miscarried. What had happened to Jack Branscombe? All through the night he had remained awake and on the look-out at the window of his cottage, but he had waited and watched in vain. Had Doris Dale failed to persuade Jack to escape like a wily fox at midnight from cover to cover? Had some mischance occurred? His vicar had detained him throughout the day on paroch al duties, but now that the evening service was over he determined to set out straight for Dalehurst Grange and ascertain the true state of affairs.

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And all at once through the gloom of the branching yews of the churchyard Doris Dale approached him.

She might have been a ghost wandering there amid the grassy mounds and mossy stones, she was so white and wan. But even the wraith of Doris Dale would be charming. He took her hands.

"Where is Jack?" he asked. "Why has he not come to me?"

"What!" Doris gave a little terrified cry. "Has he not been to you, have you not seen him?"

Hastie shook his head.

"Then something terrible has happened," Doris went on. And she told how at midnight she had dispatched Jack from Dalehurst Grange.

He strove to cheer her, suggesting all manner of possibilities. Doubtless Jack had valid reason for departing from the programme they had arranged for him. He might have done so to avoid encountering someone, friend or foe, likely to recognise him, or for a hundred other reasons. One thing was certain, he had not fallen into the hands of those on the look-out for him, or the news would have been ringing through the land.

They hushed their voices, someone was approaching. It was the schoolmistress.

"Miss Dale," she said, "can I speak with you?"

"Is it imperatively immediate?" asked Doris, imagining Mary's mission to be in connection with the school, of which she was a very active patroness.

"It is indeed imperatively immediate," said Mary Morrison. "Come with me to the school-house, for your own sake." Then she whispered: "And for the sake of someone dear to you."

Still under the impression that Mary was referring probably to some pet girl pupil, Doris left Gerald at the churchyard wicket and accompanied the schoolmistress to her rooms in the school-house.

Opening the door of the little sitting-room, the latter whispered: "One moment. I want you to prepare yourself for a very great surprise."

Still wondering, Doris entered, and the door was closed behind her. She gazed round the room, and her eyes fell on the haggard face of a man lying still asleep upon a couch.

"Jack!" she cried, and in a moment she was on her knees beside him.

"Oh! yes, yes; and you think I'm a thief and a murderer. You're sure of it—I read it in your eyes."

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"Doris, Doris!" Awakening from troubled dreams to the bliss of her sweet presence, he sprang up and clasped her in his arms.

An hour or so later she left the school-house to seek Gerald Hastie, tell him of Jack's whereabouts, and ask and consult with him as to the next steps to be taken. Mary Morrison walked with her a portion of the way. Then said, with a smile:

"Now I must get to my patient."

"Mary," said Doris, "heaven will bless you for your goodness to him. Tell me one thing, say you believe him innocent; I want you to believe him innocent. Let the world think what it will of him, I want those who are good and true themselves to believe that he is good and true."

"I will try to believe it for your sake," said Mary. "Yes, though so many circumstances appear black against him, till he is found guilty everyone——"

"Is to be presumed to be innocent. Oh, yes! I know—I know, that is the platitude of stereotyped, conventional tolerance. That isn't the believe I mean. Oh, Mary! you knew his nature before all this terrible business happened. Do you think a man's nature could so have changed?"

"Alas!" replied the other, speaking rather to herself than to her companion, "so many men, and, perhaps, women too, have two sides to their nature. Ah, you are younger than I; you cannot understand a man seeming a Sir Galahad and being Mordred."

"My Jack," cried the girl passionately, "is more than Galahad, more than Lancelot; oh, yes! far truer than Lancelot. He is my Arthur, my perfect knight, my king! Oh! I can read not so much in, as between your words, something of a story. You have loved, and love has turned to pain. You have loved someone who should have been what you believed him, all truth and honour, and your idol has been broken, crushed. Ah! you are crying. Mary, dearest Mary, forgive me. No, dear, it was not the idol that was broken, it was your heart broken and crushed by the man you worshipped."

The girls were weeping on each other's shoulders now—sisters in tears.

"But you must not judge all men by him, dear Mary," said Doris. "Oh! what a shame that a love like yours should have gathered tears for its requital. If Fate had only thrown your ways and his apart, and earlier yours and someone else's together."

"Doris, Doris!" cried Mary pleadingly, her tears shining on cheeks now scarlet.

"Mary," whispered the other, "tell me, won't there ever be a chance for dear, true, brave, loyal Gerald?"

"No, no!" cried Mary hastily.

"Why should your life be always lonely?"

"It is not lonely, dear, nor yet quite sorrowful, for if love and happiness and love's delight have flown, Fate has left the memory of days that were. Good-night."

Each went her way, Mary returning alone to the school-house.

Out of the gloom of the overhanging trees there crept a figure that followed Mary Morrison—like a shadow. Very like a shadow, the shadow that had darkened her life. For a while it followed in her track, then suddenly stopped, turned back, lit a cigar, and soliloquised:

"What's the little game? What have she and Doris been discussing—the school and the kids? No, women don't cry about other people's kids as a rule, they save up most of that for their own. Surely they weren't discussing me? No! she wouldn't give me away—wouldn't dare? Oh, yes, she'd dare, she's got nerve enough, only she isn't built that way."

"Good-night, Squire."

A deferential voice, broken by a hiccough gave the greeting.

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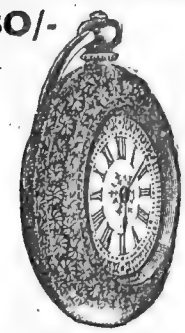

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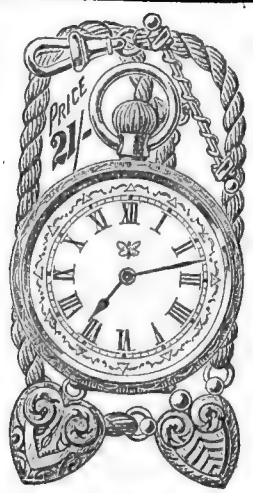

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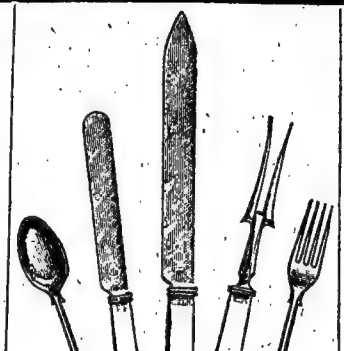

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"Good-night, Bingle," was the reply. Then he went on, sotto voce:

"I wonder if she does suspect? Her eyes gave almost a start of recognition. I must find out, but I must be careful how I go to work."

As Mary approached the school-house she heard a long, low whistle, and a man who had been standing by the gate walked quickly away. To this incident alone she attached little importance, and she was hastening down the narrow path of the little garden when, in the darkness, she caught sight of the vague outline of a moving form.

"Who is that?" she shouted, and it sprang up and made for the gate. "Who are you, what do you want here?" she went on, bravely turning back to the gate.

But the figure had now reached a low stone wall, and was scrambling over it. Swiftly as she now turned she was not in time to effect her bold purpose, for she was as brave as she was gentle, to seize him.

He had leapt into the road and was gone, disappearing in the night.

But she had caught one glimpse of his face, and she knew that the intruder was one of the brothers who lived at the cottage along the road.

And, strange to say, it was the one who was wheeled about in the invalid chair.

What—what did it mean? What could he have been doing there? Innumerable questions, suggestions, fancies, ideas, flashed through her brain. Were those two strange men, they whose occupation consisted of smoking and gossiping, in reality detectives on the track of Jack Branscombe?

Entering the school-house she sought the sitting-room, her guest was sitting up.

"Ah," he said with a smile, "you've come in at last. Was that you at the door just now?"

"No," she said. "Tell me, what do you mean?"

"Some five or ten minutes ago I heard someone as I thought fumbling at the door for the latchkey, surely that was you?"

"No, no!" she answered, more amazed than ever.

"Mary," said Jack Branscombe, "while you've been gone I've been thinking, forming my plans. I must leave here."

"But where are you to go?" she asked. "Surely at least you will wait till Doris and Mr. Hastie have discussed what is best for you to do?"

"No!" he answered. "There is one thing I cannot endure; the thought that I am, even for a while, for my own safety exposing a girl to danger. It oppressed me when hiding at Dalehurst Grange. Every hour that I am remaining here, innocent man though I am, I am risking your being charged with harbouring a fugitive from justice. I am now recovered from my exhaustion, and I will pursue my journey, let it lead where it may, and when the time is ripe for me to prove my innocence I will surrender to arrest."

And she could not dissuade him. All he would do was to agree to communicate with Doris through her, if, and when he got clear. But at midnight, come what might, he would leave the school-house.

Out of the gloom of the overhanging trees there crept a figure that followed Mary Morrison—like a shadow.

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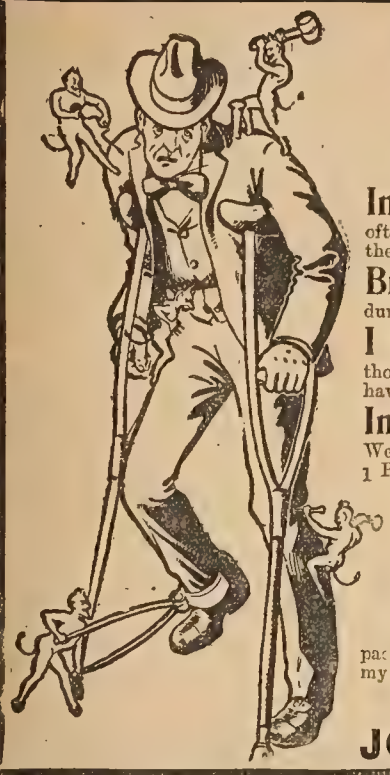

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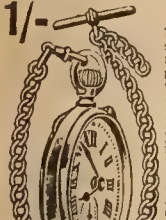

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The night crept on and the beautiful silver moon sailed up, flooding the earth with a soft light, clear almost as noon. Jack, rested, invigorated, gripped Mary's hand gratefully ere bidding her good-night.

"I shall never forget what you have risked for me, Mary Morrison," he said, "and one other gracious kindness I will ask you."

"If it is in my power I will grant it," she said.

"Believe me innocent."

"I do—I do!"

"I know my own acts, my own very folly, helped to condemn me, but I am an honest man, I swear that I am innocent; and now—good-bye."

"I will believe you and I will pray for you. But stay one moment, let me just make sure that the coast is clear."

She tripped upstairs, went to her window, gazed out on the moonlit landscape. Why, what was that? A horse and trap were standing in the road beyond, just under the elm tree. A man was at the horse's head, gazing intently along the road. And now he was ascending into the cart. Yes, yes; those for whom he was looking were arriving. Two others hastened up, climbed, one on to the tailboard, the other up alongside the man who held the reins, and this last set the horse going and for a moment lifted the fur cap to wipe his brow.

So that just as, with muffled hoofs and pneumatic tyre, muted wheels, that strange trap drove past the school-house, in the cold blue moonlight, Mary Morrison saw clearly as a moon the face of the man who held the reins.

And recognised that face, and recognising it, went down on her knees and, wringing her clasped hands, uttered a bitter cry.

"Oh, God in heaven! Now I see it all—what shall I do—what shall I do?"

CHAPTER XXII.

The Humiliation of Mr. Rossiter.

Detective Inspector Rossiter had kept his own counsel regarding that futile cross-country man hunt. In the first place a miss, even by a hair's breadth, in matters of capture, as in others, is as good, or as bad, as a mile. Secondly, his belief in Jack Branscombe's guilt was considerably shaken by Jack Branscombe's behaviour.

"I've known 'em game," he reasoned to himself, "game as pebbles, and I've known 'em generous in a way, that not being difficult seeing that what they have generally belongs to somebody else, and staunch to their pals, but no, they're not quite that sort. There's many a man would have thought twice; yes, would have thought till it was too late to do anything else but think, if he saw even his friend or brother struggling at night in the middle of that cruel, cold, dark, swift river. But with a drowning man in pursuit of him, to bring him to trial for his life, it's only a grand man could do that; too grand a man to go sneaking into people's houses while they're asleep, the man who came back after me just in time," and he shuddered as he thought of those dark, icy waters so nearly closing over him. "He couldn't have served that old man at Dalehurst Grange like that. Yes, sir?"

He started, conscious of the shadow of something towering over him, and, looking up, addressed this last remark aloud to possibly the tallest man he had ever set eyes on, or, rather, up to.

"I beg your pardon, but do you happen to know Gerry Hastie?"

"Well," said Rossiter, "I'm a comparative stranger down here— —"

"If you don't know Gerry you must be," said the other, "because, being British, you're bound to be a sportsman of some sort, whether your line is cricket, croquet, football, billiards or boats, steeple-chasing or skittles, and being British born you'll know the game. You'll play it or you'll look at it, or read about it, or talk about it; but, being British, you've got cricket in your blood, and you'll know Gerry Hastie."

"Of course," said Rossiter, his face lighting up, "you mean the Rev. Gerald Hastie who plays for the county and the M.C.C. He's the curate down here."

"That's the chap," said the other, his face lighting up, "and is he as smart as ever at the wicket?"

"Just as smart as ever," Rossiter replied enthusiastically. "Follow this road till you come to the Fallowfield Arms, then right across the green, past the church on the left and the school-house on the right, further on take the lane to the left, and you'll find his cottage, for, real gentleman and grand cricketer that he is, he lives very quietly.

"You've sized up the man," said the other, "I thank you very much. I suppose you couldn't spare time to accompany me as far as the Fallowfield Arms?"

"Not this morning, sir, thank you," said Mr. Rossiter, placing his hand in a grip which enveloped it. "I'm just now engaged on rather pressing business." And he went on his way.

Arrived at Fallowfield Hall, he found the Squire still in his dressing gown, pacing the morning room, pulling at the inevitable cigar and occasionally the big tumbler of brandy and soda.

"Any news, Rossiter?"

"Nothing in particular, sir."

"What!" And the tone of apparent unconcern changed to one of intense surprise. "You haven't caught—I mean," hastily, "no news of Branscombe yet?"

"Not a shadow, sir."

"It's a very serious matter, a desperate man like that being at large. Have a cigar, Rossiter?"

"Thank you, sir," said the other, selecting one from the cabinet. "By the bye, Mr. Roylance, are you quite certain in your own mind that John Branscombe is the man I want?"

A deep red flush for a moment came to the other's cheeks, then died away.

"I don't understand," he said, fixing just a glance on the detective as a fighting man might on an antagonist. Then, after a pause, "Is there any reason to doubt your own original theory?"

"Yes, sir," said the other.

"What is that reason?"

"I'm not quite prepared at present to say. The object of my call was, if possible, to have a little chat with Mr. Chandler."

"Very well," said the other, "you'll find him in the steward's room. By the bye, have you found any clue to *his* assailant?" There was a slight tinge of sarcasm in the tone which nettled the detective.

"I don't know, sir," he said. "I may be strong on the right trail yet, but I think I've got away from the red herring."

"Now what the dickens did he mean?" said the Squire of Fallowfield, his teeth biting deep into his cigar. "What's he going to pump Chandler about? As for him, it would have been best to have settled him then and there; I thought I pretty well had when I left him there, perhaps it's as well not, my hands are quite red enough. Besides, he's a wrong 'un, I know he's a wrong 'un, and he half knows I know it, and that gives me the pull. I might find a straight man in his place awkward, a straight man might have asked more questions and mightn't have been so glad to leave me quite alone. Richard, my friend, beware. Is Rossiter quite such a fool as you take him for? I wonder—I wonder if she's seen through the game, if she's been talking. Come what may, I must know."

(To be continued.)

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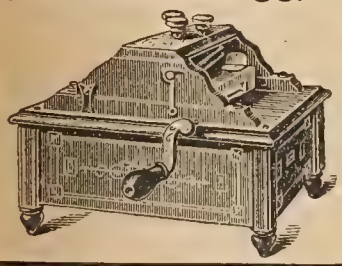

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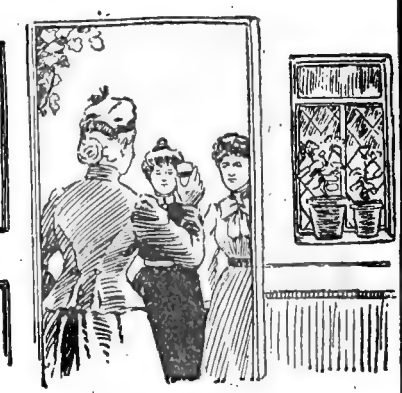
ANOTHER BILE BEAN TRIUMPH.

"Your Bile Beans have done me more good than anything I have ever tried before," wrote Mrs. H. McNair, of 11 Eliza Street, Patricroft, Lancashire, to the proprietors of Bile Beans for Biliousness.

The real weight of this simple testimony lies in the fact that the lady has spent half her life—she is now 66—in experimenting with useless preparations to find relief from the terrible agonies of indigestion, and when a "Warrington Examiner" reporter called at her home the other day to hear her story he was shown a cupboard full of every imaginable medicine and pill which had in turn been proved worthless. Bile Beans alone were equal to the task of curing her of a disease of such long standing.



"Mine was a painful case," she said to the reporter; "my stomach was so weak that I was afraid to touch food, and I began to waste away. I had no strength or energy left in me, and housework was entirely out of the question. I continued to grow weaker, and lost hope of ever being better. This distressing condition lasted up to a few months ago, when I received a booklet telling of some cases as bad as my own which Bile Beans had completely cured. Why should I not try them, too? I had a few Beans given, and they relieved me so perceptibly that I underwent a course. I began to be more able to get about, without feeling depressed or exhausted; and after giving the Beans a fair trial they entirely cured me.

"My appetite is now as healthy as it could be, and I do not fear the pain and uncomfortable feeling I always experienced before and after eating. The Bile Beans have now cured me of the indigestion completely. They have been a veritable God-send, nothing would persuade me to be without them in the house. I have strongly advised my neighbours to take them, for they have noticed the good Bile Beans have done me."

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

Have been found an undoubted cure for HEADACHE, INFLUENZA, COSTIVENESS, PILES, LIVER TROUBLE, BAD BREATH, RHEUMATISM, LIVER CHILL, INDIGESTION; DIZZINESS, BUZZING IN THE HEAD, FULNESS AFTER EATING, CONSTIPATION, LACK OF AMBITION, DEBILITY, ANÆMIA, FEMALE AILMENTS, PIMPLES, and a host of other ailments that owe their origin to defective bile flow, assimilation, and digestion. They will also be of great service in Nervous Disorders, Loss of Appetite, Shortness of Breath, Blotches on the Skin, Liver Chills, Scrofula, Insomnia, and Troubled Sleep. They act quickly in restoring females to health, and for a general aperient and tonic remedy they are almost unequalled.

IMPORTANT WARNING.

Bile Beans are NOT sold LOOSE, being put up in sealed boxes only.
All others are fraudulent imitations, and you are warned not to accept any but the genuine.

A FREE SAMPLE.

The proprietors have so much faith in the efficacy of Bile Beans that they will forward a SAMPLE FREE and a book on liver and digestive ailments, if you send your name and address, and a penny stamp (to cover return postage), along with the accompanying coupon. Address: The Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., Central Distributing Dept., Greek Street, Leeds.

Free Sample Coupon.
BILE BEANS.
Short Stories. Dec. 1901.

Bile Beans for Biliousness.

Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. To those readers who submit storyettes which are used, a six shilling novel will be awarded. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, December 9th. Postcards only, please.

The Greatest Vice.

MISTRESS (to servant, who is about to throw away an old lamp): "What is the matter with that lamp, Bridget? Does it smoke?" Bridget: "I don't know nothin' 'bout whither it smokes or drinks; but it goes out noights, mum!"

He Knew.

A BEFOGGED individual was groping his way down one of the side streets leading off the Strand when he suddenly bumped up against a man coming from the opposite direction and of him he asked: "Can you tell me where this street leads to?" "Yes," replied the other, "it leads into the river. I have just come out of it."

Why He Wanted the Soap.

MOTHER: "Mercy! What dirty hands!" Little Boy: "I think if you had ten dozen cakes of Apple's soap in the house, I wouldn't be so slow about using it." "Ten dozen cakes? Why, that would cost thirty shillings." "I know. Apple and Co. advertise that the boy selling the greatest number of cakes will get a bicycle free."

Breaking it Gently.

"REALLY, Mr. Stalate," she protested, "you have given me four hours of your time this evening." "Why—er—upon my word! So I have. The hours pass like minutes when I am with you." "You were telling me that since your promotion your time is valuable." "Yes." "Well, papa doesn't allow me to accept expensive presents from young men."

Hardly Suitable.

FIRST ACTOR: "I hear that the orchestra in your theatre were sacked in a body the other night; what was the matter?" Second Actor: "Why, they spoilt the best situation in the whole play. You know the court scene, where the hero is sentenced to death?" "Yes." "Well, they were told to play something appropriate, and the judge had no sooner put on the black cap than the idiots struck up 'Where did you get that hat.'"

How He Managed It.

THE Manager of the Company (at the gallery entrance): "Now, here, you boys, here's a ticket for each of you, and sixpence apiece. And if you don't make a noise like the interior of a cooper's shop after every act, and applaud the leading lady, I'll have the doorkeeper throw you downstairs; do you see?" The same Manager (appearing an hour later before the curtain, in response to thunderous applause): "Ladies and gentlemen, I would it were in my power to express my pleasure and surprise at this cordial "——etc.

Knew It Was Meat.

CHILD OF EIGHT (returning from school): "Mamma, we have been reading of such dreadful times. I should not have liked to live then, and I am sure you would not, for people were tied to a leg of mutton, and after gunpowder had been put round they were all blown up?" Mamma: "Are you sure it was not a stake they were tied to?" Child: "Oh, yes, mamma, it was a steak! I knew it was meat of some kind."

Preparing for Company.

JEWELLER: "Here, sir, is a clock which will, I think, please your æsthetic taste. At precisely ten o'clock every morning a chime of bells rings, and a bird hops out and sings a carol." Customer: "I will take that if you will make a few changes in it." "With pleasure." "I have a daughter, and I want the clock for the room where she entertains her company. Make it so that at eleven o'clock at night a milkman's bell will ring, and a newsboy will skip out and yell, 'Morning papers!'"

Poor, Abused Man.

PERHAPS it might be better for Mr. Smith if he were more observant, or, possibly, more something else. The other morning when he started off to town, his wife gave him an important letter to post, and when he returned in the evening it was in his pocket. "Henry," inquired his wife, just as he had settled himself comfortably, "did you post that letter I gave you this morning?" "You don't suppose, love, that I would carry it about with me, do you?" he replied, in as smooth a tone as he could muster. "I don't suppose anything else," she said, suspiciously; "where did you post it?" "In the box round the corner, love; I did it at once, dear, so I would be sure not to forget it." She jumped up suddenly. "Henry Smith," she exclaimed, "give me that letter. They moved that box to the far side of the square a month ago."

IT IS NOT

The Double Number of Pearson's Magazine (Ready November 30th.)

NOR IS IT

The Double Number of "Pearson's Weekly" (Ready December 19th).

BUT IT IS JUST

Pearson's Xmas Number,

(THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF ALL THE PEARSON PUBLICATIONS.)

NOW SELLING AT ONE SHILLING.
(Including a coloured plate.)

NOTHING OF THE KIND IN THE WAY OF XMAS NUMBERS HAS EVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

A Half-guinea Fountain Pen will each week be awarded to the reader who is the sender of the most interesting query answered on this page.

Two correct claims have been made this week in connection with the Photo Competition, and £5 notes have been forwarded to:

Mr. D. E. Jones (No. 36),
69 Beechfield Street,
Mountpottinger,
Belfast.

Mr. J. G. Adams (No. 40),
24 Broadway,
Kettering.

A further batch of photographs will be found on page 719. Tell your lady friends of this, as they are not sending in their claims nearly so frequently as the men. This week six times as many claims were received from men as from ladies.

In a fortnight's time the Christmas Double Number of *Short Stories* will be on sale, and as there is likely to be a big demand for it, you had better tell your newsagent at once to save you a copy. The price will be twopence. It will consist of sixty-four pages, containing the first instalment of a splendid New Serial, and Christmas Stories and Competitions to suit all tastes. The design of the cover, too, will be particularly appropriate to the season of the year. Don't forget to order your copy at once.

So many readers have written to me lately asking me to start the Brain Gymnasium again that I have decided to accede to their request. The first batch of puzzles will appear in the Christmas Double Number.

Advice to Readers on Various Matters.

(Replies to Correspondents.)

"J. C." has recently made the acquaintance of a young lady, but as his business keeps him late in the evening he cannot take her out to places of amusement. He wants to know whether, if he pays her expenses and she goes with lady friends, he ought to be considered "mean."

I don't see that there is the slightest cause for your being considered "mean," "J. C.," under the circumstances. It would, of course, be very different if your business did not keep you late, and you preferred paying her expenses and letting her go with lady friends to going yourself with her; in that case she would have good cause to complain. If she really wants to go out and does not approve of your arrangements for her welfare, I should think it would be better to cease paying her any attention, though if you really care for her I would suggest that you try to get an evening off now and again, so that you can take her out yourself.

"J. G. A." lives with a friend who is very irritable and much given to worrying, even over trifles. He wants me to advise him on the matter of a remedy.

This is not an easy thing to do, "J. G. A.," as I am not a medical man. What I would advise you to do, though, is to get him to play games with you. Chess is a game on which all one's thoughts must be concentrated when playing, and if he were to join you in that he would not have the opportunity of brooding over real or imaginary troubles. If neither of you know chess, try ping-pong, or one of the card games which two can play. Don't give him a chance to worry and he will soon get over the habit. I hope you will write to me again telling me how my suggestion works, after giving it a fair trial.

"Martha" writes to ask me how she can cure her little girl of rough, noisy behaviour. She is four years old, and "Martha" feels that she ought to be setting a good example to the other two children.

Be gentle with her, "Martha." Show her a good example, and don't check her unless she is too noisy. Children ought to be such happy little souls, for in years to come they have more than enough of sorrow and trouble. One of the saddest sights on God's earth is to see a wee child made prematurely old and careworn by those who should be foremost in promoting its happiness. Set her to do some simple thing for you, read to her, or tell her a tale when she seems to be getting beyond your control. Every child loves to think that she is helping "mother."

"K. B. M."—The "Blue Peter" is a three-cornered flag with a white square in the centre. The word "Peter" is a corruption of the French word "*partir*"—to go. The flag is hoisted as a signal to anyone in the town to whom any member of the crew owes money, that the ship is about to sail, and thus give them an opportunity of collecting the amounts due, and also to tell anyone on shore belonging to the ship to come on board. In the Navy in olden times it was a recognised custom that debts could be paid by the "fore-sheet," that is to say, if any member of the crew could evade his creditor until the fore-sheet was run up, he might content himself that no claim could me made against him for anything which he had purchased at the port from which the ship was about to sail.

"Mab" is in trouble about her lover. When she is out with him he seems to return her affection, but she has heard that he walks out with someone else, and once she met him with another girl. He passed it off with a joke, but she feels very unhappy.

Well, "Mab," I should advise you to wait awhile; very likely there is nothing in it. On the other hand, if you have certain proof later on that he is in the habit of walking out with other girls, I should certainly give him up.

"J. O'R."—You're quite wrong. Cats can swim if they only care to exert themselves sufficiently. The ancient Egyptians used to fish with them on the Nile, according to the representations on walls and so forth that have come down to us, and I myself have known a tabby to dive into a pond when in full cry after a rat. I don't say that a cat will go n and swim about for pleasure like a dog will; the spectacle she presents afterwards is too sorry a one for her dignified nature.

"Ivyroe" asks my advice on the following point: She is in love with a young fellow who loves her very dearly, but her father and mother think that she ought to look out for someone better, as he is only a singer on the stage. She feels sure she will never care as much for anyone else.

I see no reason why you should give him up, "Ivyroe." After all, being a public singer is no disgrace, is it?

"Masherland." — The usual method adopted to remove grease spots from a coat is the application of blotting-paper and a hot iron, but it is by no means the most efficacious. Here is a better recipe. Take a few drops of strong brandy or spirits of wine and rub it in with the hand. By this means the wax is reduced to powder and can be removed without leaving the slightest trace.

The Fountain Pen has this week been awarded to Mr. J. Coxon, Mayfield Rd., Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Printed by Horace Cox, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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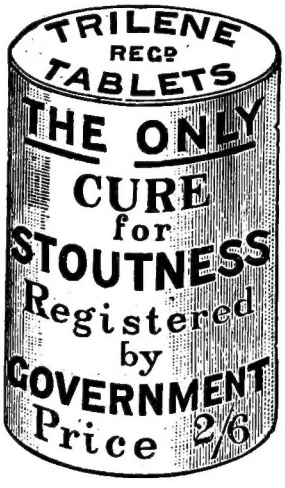
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

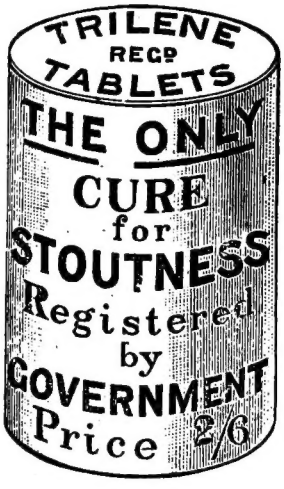
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

Miss CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st., and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lib. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.

"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholm Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

"West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets, which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. McLEOD, 44 Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weigh was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs., says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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BEECHAM'S PILLS.

A Box can Develop Every Family's Good Health; Inspire Joy, Kill Languor, Melancholy, Nervousness, or Pain; Quite Restore Stomachic Tone; Uphold Vitality, while eXacting Youthful Zest.

If you have never tasted, for yourself, the merits of this universally popular medicine, DO SO AT ONCE, and you will discover that to maintain a high standard of health and keep at the top of your condition is AS EASY AS A.B.C.

"AND HERE IS SOMETHING FOR YOU!"

The Proprietor of BEECHAM'S PILLS, knowing that most readers of his advertisements look for something fresh at this time of the year, has much pleasure in offering to send a PACKET OF NOVELTIES free to any address, on receipt of 3d. in stamps to cover cost of postage, containing:

TWO QUAINT AND PLEASING PICTURES.

Lithographed in colours on stiff cards. "IT'S TOPSY'S TURN," and "GRANDPA—THE DAY AFTER," both arranged as Almanacs for 1902, the latter being a companion to the amusing picture published last Christmas.

A SPECIAL SELECTION OF ONE DOZ. PICTURE PUZZLES, each a little entertainment in itself.

NOVELTY CALENDARS FOR 1902.

These miniature works of Art are best described as th· 20th Century triumph of pictorial and artistic printing.

Also a supply of the ever-welcome **ORACLES** and some **SONGS** and **MUSIC.**

SPECIAL NOTE.—For an additional 6d. in stamps nearly 200 Views of LONDON and Suburbs. These form the most complete set of London Views published, and during the long winter evenings will be found a never-ending source of delight and instruction.

APPLY EARLY.—Send 3d. in stamps for Packet of Novelties only, or 9d. for Novelties and London Views, writing your name and address clearly.

CUT OUT THIS ORDER FORM. IT WILL SAVE WRITING A LETTER.

To the Proprietor of Beecham's Pills, St. Helens, Lancs.

Please send (No.)_____ Novelty Packets (3d. each).

Also send (No.) _____ Sets of London Views (6d. per set extra),

(If not required please draw your pen through this line.)

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